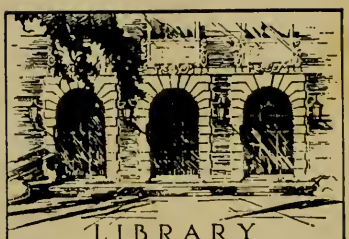

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TALES OF THE PASSIONS;

IN WHICH IS ATTEMPTED

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THEIR EFFECTS

ON

THE HUMAN MIND:

EACH TALE COMPRISED IN ONE VOLUME, AND FORMING THE SUBJECT OF A SINGLE PASSION.

BY GEORGE MOORE.

Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting;
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspired, . . .

Each, for madness rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive power.

COLLINS'S ODE ON THE PASSIONS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. WILKIE AND J. ROBINSON,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

1811.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

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TALE II.

JEALOUSY.

THE

MARRIED MAN;

AN ENGLISH TALE:

IN WHICH IS ATTEMPTED AN ILLUSTRATION OF

THE PASSION OF JEALOUSY,

IN

ITS EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN MIND.

BY GEORGE MOORE.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd;
Sad proof of thy distressful state!
Of diff'ring themes the veering song was mix'd;
And now it courted Love, now raving call'd on Hate;—

COLLINS'S ODE ON THE PASSIONS.

DEDICATION.

I HAVE neither *Patrons* to flatter nor *Favours* to solicit:—by industry and good fortune I have been enabled to dispense with the *one* and avoid the *other*. To preserve myself independent of *both*, is the first and most ardent wish of my heart.

Under circumstances so desirable to every author who would write as he thinks, and think for himself, I enjoy a degree of freedom and self-will in the dedication of this book which

should never be forfeited to patronage, nor subdued by obligation.

Influenced by these feelings, I present it

TO A

BELOVED AND RESPECTED

MOTHER.

GEORGE MOORE.

March, 1811.

PREFACE.

THE system I have endeavoured to maintain both in the former and present volume of this work, is, to exhibit under the form of a domestic tale, an illustration of the strong and baneful passions of the human mind. The one I have now selected, is characterised by its general and powerful influence, by its association with the best feelings of our nature, and by its intimate connexion with those ties and affections that ennoble the species to which we belong. With an outline composed of a plain narrative of events, I have attempted to describe its rise, progress, and maturity; and to present, under the garb of an interesting fiction, an humble, but useful lesson of morality.

In the delineation of the few characters I have introduced, it has been my most earnest wish, to keep within the limits of nature and probability. They are intended for familiar examples; and should therefore bear a close resemblance to the beings, whose feelings and actions they are supposed to represent.

The incidents I have related, may be considered as daily occurring in social life; and by a description of their effects on a private individual, whose habits and pursuits are similar to our own, I have endeavoured to trace some of those subtle movements in the human heart, which often cast a gloom over the dearest enjoyments of our existence.

I have only to add, that a few modern publications have acquired an uncommon degree of notoriety, by holding up to public view the resemblances of certain individuals in fashionable life, whose vices probably deserve a more severe punishment than any literary monitor can inflict.

Yet, as I conceive this mode of purchasing popularity unjust in itself, and derogatory to him who adopts it, I may be pardoned for observing, that I have not attempted a single *portrait* in the Dramatis Personæ of this tale. Their foibles, their errors, and their vices, are presented as general features in the human character, without any *particular object* being selected for the likeness.

JEALOUSY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are moments during our existence, when a sudden consciousness of the blessings we enjoy produces feelings of exquisite felicity. Felix Earlvin, as he one evening gazed upon his beloved wife and children, experienced such sensations in their full force. He surveyed the little group that encircled him with the tenderness of a husband and a parent; he clasped them alternately to his bosom with enthusiasm; his eyes were dimmed with tears, but they were tears of rapture. Earlvin was in his thirtieth year; his wife (who was somewhat younger) had been the object of his first affections—she was of an ami-

able disposition, lovely in her person, and accomplished in her manners. They had three fine children, the eldest only three years old, the youngest but twelve months.

His villa was situated in a romantic and beautiful country but a few miles from Monmouth—his fortune was affluent, his constitution robust and vigorous—in short, he possessed every blessing that could render life valuable, while he acknowledged his happiness, and was grateful to the Power who bestowed it.

The hour being arrived which summoned his little ones to rest, and Mrs. Earlvin having intimated she had letters to write that would occupy her time till supper, he prepared to take his evening walk alone.

It was the middle of September, the day had been sultry, and its close seemed to indicate a storm. But the appearance of the atmosphere was scarcely noticed by Earlvin, and he had

walked some distance before the increasing gloom reminded him of his return. Large drops of rain and several vivid flashes of lightning at length urged him to look for shelter. The path where he then was, had been lately cut through a thick copse, and led more directly to his house than the main road, but he knew of no habitation near it capable of affording him a retreat from the effects of the tempest. It opened on a small moor, over which it continued to within a quarter of a mile of his own grounds. After some hesitation, he resolved to proceed home without delay; he therefore quickened his pace, and shortly arrived at the extremity of the wood. Earlvin now halted for a moment; he thought he heard the sound of voices; and considered, that some persons might have sought for shelter in one of the recesses of the copse.

The rain increased, and the thunder became louder; he listened for a renewal of the sounds, but a dreary silence succeeded, and was only interrupted by powerful gusts of wind.

Earlvin recollected there were some ruins at a very small distance from the road-side, among which he might secure himself from the rain; he immediately hurried towards them, and placed himself under an arched gateway that had once led to the interior of the building. A wretched dwelling had been constructed near the entrance with a part of the old materials, and he soon discovered that the voices came from that quarter. He had remained in this situation but a few moments when he heard, or thought he heard, the name of his wife distinctly uttered from the hovel. He paused, and considered it must be delusion, but in a very short time it was repeated, and followed by a burst of wild laughter. In moving round towards the window, he perceived a horse (apparently just quitted by his rider) fastened to the shattered trunk of an old oak. Earlvin was close to the lattice, and had a partial view of the inside of this miserable hut. Two persons were within, one of whom was a figure somewhat striking. It was an old woman, clothed in mean and strange attire: she

had but little covering on her head, while her hair was in parts grey, and spread in disorder over her forehead and shoulders. Her body appeared shrunk by age and infirmity, and her face caused impressions of a very durable nature. Her sunk eyes, full brows, and pallid cheeks, were not perhaps, separately considered, any more than the distinguishing marks of her years and circumstances; but the contour of her countenance was of that description which creates awe and curiosity. She rested upon a rugged stick in a posture of attentive consultation; and, at intervals, elevated one of her hands with a violent gesture, that seemed produced by certain feelings the conversation excited. The person whom she addressed was closely wrapped up in a horseman's coat, and his face was so far shaded by his hat, as to prevent a perfect view of his features. He held a folded paper in his hand that had the appearance of a letter, to which he seemed frequently to refer in his replies to his companion. After a short interval they altered

their position, and the man prepared for his departure.

Earlvin now considered, whether it would be better to break in upon their conference, and demand the subject of that part in which the name of his wife had been mentioned, or return in the morning and procure the information he desired from the woman alone; for he suspected that the hovel was her residence, and the horseman merely a visitor. A few moments' deliberation confirmed to him that it would be policy to adopt the latter plan; he was unarmed, the male stranger might possess both the means and inclination to refuse the satisfaction he required, and might effect not only his own escape, but that of his companion. He therefore withdrew with caution from the hut, regained the path on the heath, and, in the course of half an hour, entered his own house.

He was cold, wet, and fatigued; his clothes

had, in part, dried upon his body during his return, and although he immediately changed them, he still remained languid and uncomfortable.

Mr. Osmond, a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood, joined them at supper, and attempted to rally the spirits of his host.

Felix Earlvin was naturally reserved and tenacious of his confidence: he had a heart susceptible to every feeling which does honour to the human name; but there were some singularities in his disposition.

His juvenile years as well as those of his manhood, were marked by a peculiar suspicious hesitation of intrusting his thoughts to others. The little incident he had just witnessed, would by most men have been mentioned the first opportunity that offered for the purpose; but Earlvin brooded over it in silence: to his wife, indeed, he at first intended to have communicated it, but from the extreme timidity of her cha-

racter, he feared it might occasion her some uneasiness. Mr. Osmond was his friend and companion, but to make him a partner in his thoughts never once entered his mind. Neither was his neighbour a man of much volubility; his silence, however, proceeded more from pride and caprice, than from habit or prejudice of education. Destitute of family connexions, and but little used to friendly intercourse, he immured himself within a large gloomy mansion, surrounded by domestics, who added to his establishment without increasing his comforts. At the house of Earlvin, however, he became a very general visitor, and was always earnest in his solicitations to receive him at his own.

Mr. Osmond had a London newspaper in his pocket, and the supper being over, he read various parts of it aloud to Mr. and Mrs. Earlvin, while the former reclined on a sofa with his Julia seated by his side.

It happened, that one of the paragraphs

mentioned a matrimonial separation that had lately taken place in high life, on a detection of the inconstancy of the female. There were also several children, which increased the calamity, and rendered the parties more notorious. Mrs. Earlvin listened to the account with much attention and concern. "Unfortunate woman!" she exclaimed, "however she may have erred, her situation is lamentable; there are punishments which may call forth our pity even for the vicious." "Pity!" repeated her husband with peculiar emphasis, as he raised himself on the sofa, and gazed on her with expressions of displeasure: "Pity, Julia!—is it possible that a woman, who has sullied the honour of her husband, forsaken her children, and proved herself insensible to the delicacy of her sex, can excite your pity, or merit your compassion?"

Julia, alarmed and displeased at this reply, remained for some moments silent, struggling with the feelings it produced; while the eyes of their visitor were fixed upon them both, although

he artfully pretended to be intent on the paper he held in his hand.

Mrs. Earlvin could with difficulty conceal her tears; she attempted to speak, but her voice failed, while a pause extremely distressing ensued, which was interrupted by Mr. Osmond.

"The discovery of the lady's infidelity," said he, having read the remaining part of the paragraph to himself, "was rather extraordinary; her conduct had ever been considered irreproachable, when a confidential tête-à-tête one dark night between her waiting-maid and the valet of her gallant was overheard by her husband, who, unperceived, listened to a description of his injuries, and witnessed the vulgar merriment of the parties at his disgrace." Earlvin, before his guest concluded this short observation, had extended his hand to his wife as a confession of his error, and an offer of reconciliation. She languidly smiled her forgiveness, but was silent and dejected during the remainder of the night.

Her husband's complaints of indisposition, however, the following morning, at once annihilated her resentment, and called forth her usual tenderness and affection.

He had enjoyed but little repose; his pulse were high, and he had violent pains in his head and back, with a considerable degree of fever.

A medical man in the neighbourhood was immediately sent for, and in a short time arrived.

Mr. Sulfit was a man of pleasure, a man of taste, and an apothecary. He descended from a horse whose lean carcase paid no great compliment to the humanity of his master, and whose strength and vigour having been spent in the service of the father, was now doomed to languishout a laborious old age in the employment of the son. Dr. Sulfit procured all his comforts abroad, and made every sacrifice at home. He received tenfold enjoyment

from the luxuries he fed upon at the tables of others, from the selfish consideration of the spare manner in which he could furnish his own. His wife was a mere drudge, low-bred, ignorant, and subdued by his tyranny: he had expended the little fortune she possessed in the gratification of his own pleasures, while she felt too much awed by the superiority of his understanding and the authority of his manners, to inquire, why she had not partaken of them. Dr. Sulfit, when out of his own house, was a simpering, smirking, accommodating little man, who was at every body's command, and willing to partake of every body's good fare: he could adjust himself to all humours and all situations; he was the first to propose amusement, and the last to break it up; and he was ever at the elbow of the lady of the mansion where he visited, to anticipate her wishes, or attend her commands. He would gallop, or, more properly, walk his lean horse half a dozen miles out of his direct road to carry a letter or a message; he would even make up his physic to suit the palates of

his patients, and give it himself to the children when the nurses failed in the attempt.

Such was the doctor when any where but at home; as soon, however, as he entered under his own roof, he assumed a degree of authority and independence that made ample amends for the servility which had filled his stomach with good things, and occasioned the scanty supper that was spread for him to be preserved as a dinner for the next day. His ring at the gate was a signal of consternation and alarm; his progress from it to his sitting-room a kind of triumphal procession, in which his wife and the domestics assisted at their different stations. The latter having taken his horse and conducted him with due homage to the door of the parlour, he was there regularly met by the former, who, with a candle in one hand, and his gown and slippers in the other, attended his commands till she saw him clothed in the paraphernalia that constituted his night-dress, and beheld him sink into his great arm-chair with an inward groan

of satisfaction, which was the token for her release, and a permission to be seated, if it suited her convenience. The cards, messages, and occurrences of the day, were then laid before him by his shopman, who received his orders for the ensuing one with cringing obedience.

The doctor was conducted by Mrs. Earlvin to the chamber of her husband. He was no stranger to the house or the good living it afforded; he had already attended the children, and had more than once dined at their table. Having proceeded to the bedside with much gravity, he pulled out his watch and felt the pulse of his patient. Then after a pause of some minutes, he suddenly turned to Mrs. Earlvin (who had observed his countenance with considerable anxiety), and exclaimed, "Pray, madam, have you heard of the sale which is expected to take place at your neighbour's, Sir Harry Ribbert's?"—Then addressing himself to a servant, he cried, "Open that window a little more, we have too warm an

atmosphere here. I understand, madam, there are several fine pictures to be disposed of, and some few of the old masters—Carracci, Guido, Rembrandt, and so forth."

Mrs. Earlvin coldly replied, she had neither heard of the auction nor the pictures, and with much earnestness requested to know his opinion of his patient.

" Why, madam," replied the doctor, " Mr. Earlvin is very unwell, very unwell indeed, and has a considerable degree of fever, which we must endeavour to subdue. Yet I hope, madam, in a little time, with care and attention, we shall be able to restore him to his family and friends."

Earlvin now languidly inquired if he might rise to dinner?—" Oh dear! no," answered the doctor with quickness, " don't mention it, my dear sir; get up! not for the universe—a little patience, a few draughts, and a short confine-

ment, will, I hope, set all matters right. Talking of the right puts me in mind of the wrong—he! he! he! Pray, madam, have you heard that a very suspicious-looking person was seen lurking about your neighbourhood towards the close of yesterday evening?"

Earlvin raised himself in the bed with much anxiety at this question, and asked if the person to whom he alluded was a man or a woman?

"Oh! a man, sir," answered the doctor, "mounted on a very fine horse, and muffled up in a great coat. He passed your house several times I understand, and afterwards suddenly disappeared without speaking to any one."

"Very extraordinary," replied Earlvin, pausing. "Pray, did you, my dear Julia, observe any such person?"

His wife answered in the negative. Then turning to Sulfit, he inquired, if he had ever

observed a very strange-looking old woman about the place, clothed in a fantastical manner, and of an appearance extremely wild and uncouth? Both Dr. Sulfit and Julia listened to this question with much astonishment; and the alarm of the latter was very considerably increased, when the doctor, by a significant look, gave her to understand, he considered it as the effects of a bewildered imagination.

" No, sir, I cannot say I ever did," replied the doctor. " I never take much account of old women." Then shaking hands with his patient, he continued, (with a grin of self-complacency at his sagacity,) " and let me persuade you, my good sir, to take no account of them neither; you may rely upon it, the young ones are more deserving of your attention."

Mrs. Earlvin waited for his leaving the chamber in agony: the idea of her husband's derangement urged her to consider his indisposition of a much more serious nature than she had ex-

pected. She conducted the doctor to another apartment, and requested his candid opinion of the case. "My dear madam!" he exclaimed, observing her extreme agitation and distress, "Mr. Earlvin is certainly ill, as I before said, very ill; a slight insanity has taken place; I perceived it immediately I entered the chamber."

"Oh! heavens," exclaimed Julia, "this is dreadful; your hesitation confirms to me that you consider him worse than you choose to confess.—Had we not better call in additional advice? A consultation will perhaps be necessary."

It was a rule with Dr. Sulfit, to answer all questions relative to his patients on a first visit, by a grave shake of the head or shrug of the shoulders; and if importuned to give a verbal opinion by those whom he was incapable of silencing in any other way, he generally created alarm and apprehensions, by evasive re-

plies, half sentences, and seeming absence of mind. The doctor's reasons for this mode of conduct were not without force: in the first place, it always produced another attendance; in the second, if the patient recovered, he acquired more credit by the danger having been magnified; and, in the third, if he died, it implied that the doctor had no hopes of his living, although his humanity urged him to conceal his judgement. In the present instance, however, the mention of other advice being called in, reminded him that he had gone rather too far with his favourite system; he therefore immediately retracted, and in some degree soothed the anxiety and terror which his previous behaviour had excited in Mrs. Earlvin. When about to take his leave, he again observed, that the utmost care and attention must be exerted to watch the progress of the fever, and mentioned that he should call again in his return home to dinner. Mrs. Earlvin requested he would take his dinner with her, and the doctor, with a sim-

pering smile of satisfaction, declared he never refused the invitation of a lady.

Earlvin was confined to his chamber five weeks; the insanity which Dr. Sulfit had so suddenly perceived and confidently expected to increase, never took place; he therefore claimed the merit of preventing it, and at length declared, with some truth, that his only apprehensions were for the *too sudden* recovery of his patient. Yet he preserved him a sufficient time to place his name at the head of a long account in his diary, and to partake of all the good things which his table afforded; while he established himself on such a footing of intimacy in the family, as enabled him to place them on his regular list of accidental visits.

Earlvin, during his indisposition, although attended with the most affectionate care by his wife, was often left for long intervals to his own reflections. The interview he had witnessed in the

wood was continually before his eyes: he could not account for the forcible impressions it had made upon his mind, and was even angry with himself for remembering it. Yet his curiosity was excited by the consideration, how his wife could have become the subject of their discourse: various were the ways in which he attempted to account for this circumstance, but none of them were convincing or even probable. In the course of his suppositions, some occurred, that were as alarming in their nature as they were wild and chimerical in their formation; yet, under a strange perversity of the human mind, he dwelled on them perhaps with more earnestness than on those which came within the limits of his better judgement.

"Had two females," whispered Earlvin to himself during one of his meditations, "been talking of my wife, it is likely I should not have experienced so absurd, so idle a curiosity; but it is the mysterious male stranger that engenders these thoughts in my mind. Why on

horseback? Why muffled up as if afraid of being known? Why talk of my wife with an apparent beggar? And why pass my house several times in the dusk of the evening? That has indeed the most strange appearance of the whole. Julia declares she never saw him; one would almost suppose it impossible; yet to my knowledge she never told me a falsehood: and why should I suspect her now? Suspect—ridiculous! what have I to suspect? I wish this affair had never happened; I am a fool, an idiot, to think of it at all."

Yet Earlvin continued to think upon it daily, and almost incessantly. He had observed the effect which his unconnected question relative to the old woman had upon Dr. Sulfit, and he resolved, for the present, to make no farther inquiries.

A fortnight elapsed after he quitted his chamber before the doctor would allow him to ride out; and another week before he

would consent that he should take his usual walks. At length, however, he found himself free from the trammels of this tedious apothecary, and the first use he made of his liberty was to proceed alone to the spot where he had witnessed the conference. His astonishment was extreme, when he perceived that not a vestige of the hovel remained. He inquired of a man who passed him a few minutes after he arrived, what had become of the cottage which had formerly stood among the ruins?

"Lord love your heart, your honour," replied the farmer, "it has been pulled down and cleared away this month and more."

"Indeed! and what has become of its inhabitants?"

"Its inhabitants, your honour?" returned the man with a vacant stare of amazement, "Lord bless your honour, it has not been inhabited for

these four years. Farmer Perkins, who lives hard by your honour's farm in the close yonder, claimed a kind of right to it, and packed it off, as I may say, one morning, without why or wherefore. He is that there sort of man, your honour, who does these here kind of things, and neither says with your leave nor by your leave, your honour."

The loquacity of the farmer continued for some time, but Earlvin, lost in his own reflections, heeded him not; when, having finished his harangue, and uttered his congratulations upon seeing his honour about again, he departed.

Earlvin returned to his home, and resolved, in the comforts of domestic happiness, to lose the recollection of a foolish incident, which indeed he was ashamed of remembering.

Yet he was unable to fulfil his resolutions, and the consciousness of his imbecility increased his uneasiness and vexation. Those prominent

passions and feelings that are so often discovered in the human character, and so greatly to be dreaded, if excited to excess, are not always the effects of trivial and superficial causes; on the contrary, they are sometimes engendered by powerful and progressive impressions in the early part of existence, which are imperceptibly nourished in our youth, and become a part of our nature in maturity.

Felix Earlvin was a striking example of this position: the events which he had formerly witnessed, and his own reflections upon them, had produced in his mind peculiar modes of thinking, and called forth certain conclusions that were gradually moulded into fixed and positive principles. A relation of these events, and their consequences, will be given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUCCESS OF A POOR MAN'S INDUSTRY; THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF A RICH MAN'S HOPES; AND A PROOF OF A YOUNG MAN'S HONOUR.

Abel Earlvin, the grandfather of the subject of this memoir, was thrown on the world a poor and friendless orphan, at the age of ten years: his mind uncultivated, and his body robust and vigorous from the apparent hardships which are inflicted by poverty. A farmer, who resided near the cottage of his late parents, received him as a menial and laborious assistant in his household. Humanity was not the cause of this act; the farmer perceived the boy was willing and able to work, and he considered

he would want no wages, and had been used to hard living. Abel, however, soon evinced powers of understanding that amazed and chagrined his ignorant employer. This man had children of his own, on whom he lavished the most superfluous expenses; while his extreme parsimony and severity towards the orphan he pretended to succour, formed a contrast equally striking and disgusting. His disappointment was extreme, in witnessing the mental superiority of the child whom he considered as dependent on his bounty, and his rigour increased as the merits of his victim became more conspicuous. His tyranny, however vexatious and distressing, was incapable of subduing the genius that was the cause of his hate. Abel had the book of nature for his study; and though the tears which he shed would often dim the objects that excited his curiosity and called forth his reflections, still they were sources of delight, which soothed his present sorrows, and warmed him with hopes of the future. Perhaps the strongest impressions he received from the peculiar cir-

cumstances under which he was placed, were a sense of the comforts enjoyed by his master, and a reverence for the riches that procured them. His reveries did not end here, but branched out into various and intricate directions, that terminated in one general effect, the passion of avarice. He would gaze with rapture on the few shillings he possessed, and amuse himself by calculating on their probable increase, as far as his power of reckoning permitted. Then he would enumerate the gratifications he might purchase with them, and anticipate the respect they would produce, while his nightly dreams realised to his enraptured fancy the boldest flights of his imagination.

Thus passed three years of Abel's life; when, on a winter's evening, as he was returning from an errand to a neighbouring village, he was suddenly accosted by one whose voice he thought he had before heard, although he had no recollection of his person. The man, however, soon made himself known; he had lived as a plough-

man with the farmer, when Abel first entered his family. About six months after that period he quitted his service, and was persuaded to go to London, from whence he had now arrived, equally improved in his manners and dress. Here was another subject for Abel's curiosity and reflection; he was persuaded to partake of some refreshment at a public house near the spot where they met, and, during the time they remained together, he made various inquiries of his companion, as to the means and progress of his advancement. On his return home, he received a severe chastisement from his master for having remained out so late: he threw himself on his bed of straw, writhing under the punishment that had been inflicted upon him, while his thoughts were wholly occupied on the good fortune of his old acquaintance, and the circumstances by which it had been produced. In the course of their conversation Abel was informed, that he returned to London the following morning, and they agreed to meet before his departure. A strong desire to accompany

this man was raised in the bosom of the boy, and the late violence of his master had increased it. Before he arose in the morning, Abel had determined to escape from his bondage; having packed up the few clothes he possessed, which formed only a small bundle, and placed his little store of money carefully in his pocket, he bid adieu to a dwelling, where, under the specious appearance of charity, he had received the most barbarous treatment, and where the labour of his infant hands had more than trebly repaid the scanty meals with which he had been fed. His friend, whose ideas of propriety were overbalanced by the resentment he himself entertained against the farmer, applauded his resolution, and readily consented to take him under his protection. His travelling-expenses reduced his property to half a crown when he entered London; but on the following day, through the exertions of his companion, he was settled in a comfortable situation, where, in addition to his clothes and food, he was to receive a quarterly salary of twenty shillings for pocket-money.

His station was that of an errand-boy in a merchant's counting-house: his adroitness and capacity were soon perceived by his master, who ordered one of his clerks to give him a few lessons in writing and arithmetic. This indulgence, aided by his industry after the hours of his labour, in the course of a few months, rendered him a tolerable penman, and gave him some knowledge of accounts. His wages were then increased to ten pounds per annum, and, at times, he was permitted to give assistance at the books. Two years more elapsed, during which he greatly improved himself in his education by means of private instruction, and gained a considerable knowledge in the business that was going forward. At this period, one of the junior clerks died, and the merchant resolved that Abel should be invested with his situation. His passion for money increased with the possession of it; he denied himself every enjoyment which was attended with expense; and in the course of seven years, he was not only a confidential and principal assistant in the concern,

but had amassed together a sum of six hundred pounds. His master's only daughter managed the domestic affairs of his family, her mother having been dead some years. She was a young woman with few personal attractions, and an inferior understanding; her father had carefully secluded her from society, and kept her totally ignorant of the world. Abel soon discovered he might profit by her inexperience, and, in a short time, was convinced her affections were his own. Hesitation or diffidence were not prominent traits in his character; he boldly declared to his master his regard for his daughter, and asked his consent to their union. The merchant, although he did not immediately acquiesce with a request which appeared somewhat presuming, yet, after a few months' reflection, considered he had little prospect of settling his daughter to greater advantage. In a very short time the preliminaries were settled, and Abel Earlvin, on the day of his nuptials, became the partner of his father-in-law. He had formerly looked forward to this event as the summit of

his wishes, but as he gradually advanced towards its completion, his ambition raised new objects for attainment, while those he had already within his grasp seemed deprived of half their value. Immediately he beheld himself a father, his plans and speculations for the increase of his wealth became far more extended. The period of his own existence was no longer the focus in which all his visionary schemes of aggrandisement centred; he had now a son to preserve his name, and extend those honours which were capable of being purchased by the fruits of his good fortune. This son, by profusion and elegance, might veil in oblivion the sources of his prosperity. "Yet why should they be veiled in oblivion?" whispered Abel Earlvin to himself, during one of his midnight reveries over his cash ledger; "have they not been procured by virtuous industry? Will he have cause to blush at the name of his father, when he reflects that he was a conscientious tradesman, and an honest man?" These considerations had much force, and carried with them powerful conviction. But

his money introduced him into circles, whose contempt of his origin and education, was equally mortifying and illiberal.

" My boy," he exclaimed, " should Heaven preserve his life, shall not be subject to these cruel feelings of inferiority; his education shall render him capable of supporting, with propriety, the elevated station his fortune will enable him to maintain. The connexions he shall form will sink the recollection of those from which he sprung; his children may still farther ennoble the name I bequeath to them, and their posterity, in the blaze of increasing grandeur, remember their founder only as the origin of their dignity and honours."

Such were the speculations of a worldly man, whose imagination was the more warm and aspiring from the uninterrupted successes that had hitherto attended his undertakings. These wanderings were even continued in his dreams; he beheld himself surrounded by titled grand-

children; he saw mitres and coronets within the grasp of his progeny, while his heart beat high with exultation and rapture. From a feverish slumber of this description he was one morning suddenly called by one of his clerks, and had scarcely opened his eyes, before the cause of his being disturbed was explained. His father-in-law was dying in an adjoining chamber, and Mrs. Earlvin had already quitted her bed to attend him. He hurried to the apartment, but his old benefactor had already breathed his last. He gazed on the corpse with trembling agitation; it presented an awful lesson on the fallacy of those anticipations that were the continual subject of his thoughts. While the tears of his wife, and the condolence of their friends, kept this awful example in his mind, Abel resolved to prepare himself for as sudden a dissolution as that of his father-in-law; but, on the day of the funeral he was informed, that, in addition to becoming the sole possessor of the lucrative concern, in which he had hi-

therto only stood as second, he was to receive, in right of his wife, estates and funded property to the amount of sixty thousand pounds. This was a powerful and agreeable surprise, for his most sanguine expectations had not reached to more than half the sum. The same night cleared his house of all the emblems of death, except the splendid mourning of its inhabitants; and, in the busy occupation of receiving his new-acquired property, he was necessitated to defer, for some time, those resolutions relative to his religious and moral duties, which had been formed by the sudden event that had so greatly increased his fortune. The impressions, however, of this domestic calamity, were not to be effaced from the bosom of his wife; the alarm and terror it occasioned, brought on complaints of a very dangerous tendency. She survived her parent but two years, during which period, she languished under such extreme bodily infirmities, that her dissolution was considered rather as a relief, than deplored as a misfortune. Al-

though her husband evinced much grief at her funeral, yet he soon recovered his usual serenity and spirits.

His extensive concerns engrossed the whole of his time and attention, except what was taken up in the care of his child. His contracts with government, his successful speculations in the public funds, added to his very large shares in the India trade, trebled, in the course of twelve years, the property he possessed by the death of his father-in-law.

His son had now attained his fifteenth year; and his education, to this period, had been conducted with that peculiar anxiety which is experienced by a doating parent for the maturement of an only child.

Young Earlvin, when six years old, was removed from a preparatory school of some note to a public seminary of the first reputation, the celebrity of which, however, had not sufficient

weight with his father, to urge him to rely wholly on the care or abilities of its masters; he therefore engaged a private tutor, whose character for learning demanded a very high salary. At the age of fifteen he was placed at Eton, and a lodging near the school was also provided for the tutor, who still accompanied his pupil, and, though not allowed to interfere in his regular studies, was directed to aid him by his private advice and instruction. At Eton he remained five years, and, at twenty, was entered as a student at Oxford. His extra tutor was then discharged, under the supposition that his pupil must have acquired every thing he had the power of teaching, and a new one engaged, who stood high in the college in which he was placed. Three years more elapsed, and the last and finishing part of his education was put in practice—his travels. His private tutor was again dismissed, and a third engaged for the purpose of introducing him into foreign countries, and explaining with ability every circumstance which might excite his curiosity.

During these various arrangements for improvement, Mr. Earlvin zealously watched the object he was so carefully rearing. One less prejudiced, and possessed of more discernment, would have perceived, that whatever expense and attention might be exerted in his behalf, he had neither talents to cultivate, nor genius to expand. His mind was of that class which defies all attempts at improvement; there was but little difference in his powers of intellect between the days of his youth and those of his manhood. His disposition was pliant and amiable, his temper placid and serene; he received with patience the exercises that were given to him, but he was never able to execute them. He had many follies, but no vices; he was the friend of every one who asked his assistance, and the dupe of those who were cruel enough to take advantage of his good-nature. His tutors were too much alive to their own interests to declare to his father, that, which the first few days of their occupation confirmed to themselves, his total inability to profit by their

instructions; while Mr. Earlvin, delighted with their reports of his improvement, and unable to discover they were false, inwardly applauded his own sagacity, and looked forward with the most sanguine expectations to the completion of their task. This period he considered would be, the return of his boy to his native country, and he determined to give eclat to the epoch, by entirely resigning all his mercantile concerns, and establishing his heir in a style the most splendid and liberal.

The moment to which he had so long looked forward for the confirmation of all his hopes, and the reward of all his toils, at length arrived; he embraced his son with ecstasy, and was delighted with the improvements he perceived in his person and address. For some months Mr. Earlvin was too much engaged with his new arrangements to observe the natural weakness and imbecility of him, for whom they were all intended. From his travels, he had acquired nothing but extravagance and conceit; his prin-

ciples were tainted with the licentiousness of foreign manners, and the little understanding he possessed, was perverted by the affectation of foreign knowledge. However his father might hitherto have been deceived in his character, either from extreme affection or unlimited confidence in the system of his education, his settlement was an event which exposed his follies in too glaring a light, to be concealed even from one who was so little inclined to discover them. Mr. Earlvin was now convinced, under the most heartfelt sorrow and disappointment, that his son needed a tutor at this period more than at any former part of his life, while he seemed to possess those notions of independence which precluded all hope of his obeying one. His temper was still good, and his disposition, in many points, amiable; but he had unfortunately acquired a taste for the society of those who hourly imposed on the one, and corrupted the other. His father was almost distracted; he expostulated, raved, and entreated; he deplored the destruction of all those schemes which were to

have repaid the toils of his industry, and, for the completion of which, he had dedicated the chief part of his existence. Every method he could devise was attempted for the reform of young Earlvin, but they proved useless and ineffectual. He then, with a heavy heart and melancholy countenance, requested the advice of his friends, and received so many opinions on the subject, that he was rather confused than instructed. At length one, with whom he had long been on terms of intimacy, proposed marriage as the most probable event to domesticate his son. The arguments he used in behalf of this opinion, made considerable impression on his auditor; Mr. Earlvin was aware he had interested motives for the advice, yet his observations created hopes of success.

This friend had a daughter possessed of great personal attractions; young Earlvin, since his return to England, had been a frequent visitor at his house, to which he had received very urgent invitations. Mr. Nesbit was a man of

moderate fortune, shrewd, artful, and insinuating. He considered his daughter as a piece of live merchandise, which he had a right to dispose of to the best advantage, and had, from her infancy, instilled into her mind those notions of dependence, which were calculated to render her passive and obedient to his wishes.

Young Earlvin, whose passions were as warm as his faculties were weak, in his first interview with Miss Nesbit, evinced the impressions which her beauty had made upon his heart. She needed not the instructions of her father to improve them; she was perfectly capable of managing her lover, and equally anxious to secure him. Mr. Nesbit was aware of the uncertainty of reformation by marriage; he well knew his daughter might be sacrificed in the experiment; but he calculated her situation by the doctrine of chance, and resolved to place her future happiness on the die. Before his advice to old Earlvin they had been privately married, and by the time the latter had made

up his mind to consent to their union, he was presented with a grandson. The old gentleman expressed some displeasure and alarm at the duplicity of his friend; he was, however, in many points, a philosopher, and resolved to make the best of an event which he had not the power to alter. His hopes on the consequences of this marriage were in part fulfilled: his son, in the occupation of domestic concerns, resumed his natural character; his imbecility remained, but his extravagance and follies were in some measure subdued. His wife, a woman of strong mind and violent temper, in the course of a few years reduced him to the most perfect state of submissive obedience to her will. His admiration of her person was gradually moulded into a profound respect for her abilities, in which he had so strong a confidence, as to trust her with the entire management of his fortune. The severity she had experienced while under the protection of her father, rendered her less capable of using with discretion her unlimited power. Mr. Nesbit survived their union but

a few years; during his life he maintained a sufficient degree of authority over Mrs. Earlvin, to restrain her actions within the bounds of prudence, but his death was the epoch of her freedom: neither public opinion nor private complaint had any effect on her inclinations; she treated her husband as a cipher, and his friends with contempt.

Felix Earlvin, their only child, had at this period attained his twelfth year; he had hitherto been educated at an eminent school in Yorkshire, but was now, by the directions of his mother, recalled home and placed under a private tutor. His grandfather watched with anxiety the developement of talents he had in vain expected from his son. Felix was the last and only hope on which he rested the remains of those visionary schemes he had nourished through early life, and preserved even in old age. He became a resident in his son's house, under an idea that his presence might have some influence on the conduct of his wife; but

he had soon the mortification to perceive, that his advice was turned into ridicule, and his company considered as an intrusion. The society of his grandson became now his only consolation; every hour which was not devoted to his studies, was anxiously sought by the old gentleman as an antidote to the anguish he experienced from the weakness and neglect of his parents.

Felix soon evinced an understanding and capacity of a very different kind to that of his father; he listened attentively to the complaints of the elder Earlvin (which were uttered with more irritation than prudence), and reflected upon them in a very unusual way for one of his years. He beheld the levity, the extravagance, and the imprudence of his mother with disgust; and he marked the credulity, the weakness, and the injuries of his father, with shame and agony. He observed him not only the dupe of his own wife, but a mere butt for the imposition and ridicule of those whom she invited to her house.

He saw him lose at the gaming-table with the imbecility of a child, and lavish his fortune on men who had not sufficient delicacy to conceal their contempt in his presence. Scenes like these, and the reflections they produced, engendered in the bosom of Felix Earlvin, seeds of jealousy and suspicion, which were never entirely eradicated. His grandfather was continually by his side, and always willing to explain the artifices that were practised on his parent; while the astonished and indignant youth became fully convinced of the accuracy of his observations, and the justice of his complaints.

The period, at length, arrived, when he considered himself bound to expostulate with his mother, and advise his father. The death of the elder Earlvin, who bequeathed him the principal part of his fortune (independent of his parents), urged him to the task. His exertions, however, were as useless as they were strenuous; he was accused of presumption, and upbraided for his cruelty. The conduct of his mother

became daily more flagrant, her errors increased with her years, and her extravagance was hourly reducing her husband and herself to poverty.

About this time his father was suddenly taken ill of a fever, which deprived him of life in a few days, and Mrs. Earlvin survived her husband but six months. Neither grief nor remorse occasioned her death; during the short period of her widowhood, she evinced the most perfect indifference for her loss, and even refused to comply with those forms which respect and decency required.

Felix Earlvin, during that part of his existence in which the accumulation of intellectual knowledge forms the chief source of rational enjoyment, was surrounded by scenes most likely to raise his curiosity. His eager inquiries of youthful wonder were answered by his grandfather, whose age, feelings, and situation, prompted him to explain with precision, but to moralise with severity. Felix was neither too young to

be insensible to the flagrant impositions that were practised on his father, nor too old to behold them without terror and dismay. He felt conscious of his inability to discover them by his own exertion, and dreaded the time when he might be deprived of the monitor who assisted him. These feelings were created by youthful diffidence; a few years subdued his alarms, and rendered him capable of taking care of himself; yet the reflections in which he had formerly indulged, his anxious exertions to discover imposition, and secret exultation in his success, were not entirely eradicated by his present confidence and security. There still remained in his mind, seeds of jealousy and suspicion, that were capable of renovation from very different causes to those from which they originated.

Felix, a very short time after the death of his parents, became acquainted with a young lady whose mental and personal accomplishments were of a very superior kind, but whose family and circumstances occasioned some power-

ful objections to a matrimonial connexion. The man who had brought her up from her infancy, and who declared himself her father, was poor, dissipated, and unprincipled. Earlvin's introduction to Miss Roseville was through some civilities he paid to her at a public place during an alarming quarrel in which her father was concerned. He attended her home; the delicacy of her manners, and her apparent sensibility to the errors of her parent, rendered her extremely interesting, and Felix gladly accepted the invitation of Captain Roseville to dine with them the following day. She had made a considerable impression on his heart before he became perfectly acquainted with the character of her father. Each succeeding interview increased his admiration of the one and dislike of the other. Earlvin, however, continued his visits for two years, yet he still paused between inclination and prudence. His conduct was entirely uncontrolled; he was answerable to no one for his actions, but he had acquired prudence from forcible examples: he recollected the behaviour

of his mother, and the impositions on his father, and he considered, that Miss Roseville might be capable of concealing from him various imperfections in her temper and disposition. The names and circumstances of her family were cautiously concealed from her. It was in vain she requested information on these points; Captain Roseville, indulgent, and always ready to oblige her in every other wish, was sullen, reserved, and mysterious, whenever such questions were put to him. The sensibility of his daughter's feelings, and the goodness of her heart, were evinced in all her actions; her virtues were admired with awe and respect even by his dissolute companions. Felix had various opportunities of observing these amiable qualities during the long period of his intimacy with her, yet he still continued his visits with the most marked and peculiar attention, without entering into those explanations which propriety seemed to demand. Captain Roseville, at length, considered it necessary to address him on the subject; he requested at once a prompt and posi-

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tive declaration of his intentions. Felix apologised, hesitated, and evaded the question; the captain was irritated, and they parted in anger. Earlvin resolved to leave London immediately; but the sudden death of Roseville, the following week, urged him to return and give every assistance in his power to the unprotected Julia. The affairs of her late parent were in a very confused and embarrassed state. He had made no will; the property he left behind him was not equal to the discharge of his just debts, and Felix made up the deficiencies from his own purse. Julia was still without a provision; she had already been forced, through her unfortunate situation, to accept of obligations extremely distressing, and she now resolved to procure a maintenance with that degree of independence which was alone calculated to preserve her character from reproach. This resolution had considerable effect on Earlvin; he began to consider, that the confidence she had placed in him would be liable to misconstruction, which their separation would most probably confirm. Much

was to be apprehended from the change of situation she had determined to adopt; her affections might be alienated, and her principles corrupted. During his long intimacy with her, although he had watched her actions with the most scrutinising earnestness, his admiration of her character had daily increased. These reflections, at length, urged him to be explicit; he avowed his passion, and candidly confessed the causes which had prompted him to conceal it. This confession confirmed to Julia those traits in his disposition she had for some time suspected. She was aware they were threatening omens to their happiness; but her affection towards him urged her to consider that she might be enabled to pursue a line of conduct which would tend to destroy their effects. In the course of a few months they were united, and retired to a large estate in Monmouthshire, that formed a part of the property Mr. Earlvin had received from his grandfather. In this retreat, they possessed every enjoyment which health and affluence could bestow. The sur-

mises and suspicions, that had hitherto agitated the bosom of Felix Earlvin, were now hushed in the quiet and calm possession of those comforts which he experienced in the midst of a beloved family. His most anxious hopes were realised in the tenderness and amiable qualities of his adored Julia, whose whole time was dedicated to the affectionate duties of a wife and a mother. The neighbourhood in which they resided afforded a select, though not splendid, society. Their mode of living was liberal, yet economical; their table was never spread with superfluous abundance, or thinly covered with scanty elegance. Their servants were properly managed, yet well treated; they had an hospitable home, without a profligate establishment.

Such was the situation of Felix Earlvin and his family at the commencement of this history. He possessed virtues that rendered him deserving of happiness; but he had passions which, if once brought into action, were capable of destroying it.

CHAPTER III.

PROTECTION AND DEPENDENCE.

FELIX EARLVIN could not forget his adventure in the wood. His reflections upon it were not perhaps of a nature to occasion him much serious uneasiness, yet they excited a tormenting curiosity which harassed and perplexed him. He was sometimes reserved, at others melancholy, and often irritable. His wife discovered the alteration in his manners with alarm, and all her powers were immediately exerted to sooth and compose him. Earlvin could not but be sensible of her tenderness: and his consciousness of it reproached him with the cruelty and weakness of his own conduct. However motives of

delicacy might urge Mrs. Earlvin (while she gave way to his humour) to make no inquiries as to the cause of it, yet her fears created various suspicions, of a very different nature from the ridiculous incident itself. Earlvin, however, had another spy upon his conduct, whose penetration was equally acute, although it originated from very different motives. Mr. Osmond, his neighbour, observed the change in Earlvin, even on the very night of its commencement. Some prominent traits in the character of this man have been already noticed; there was a mystery in his concerns and mode of living which created astonishment in the vulgar, and kept him at some distance from his equals. He was considered rich, but no one could tell from what sources he had derived his wealth. His lands were extensive, his mansion large, his furniture splendid, and his domestics numerous; yet he neither appeared to enjoy them himself, nor dispense happiness to others. He visited but few, and those few were seldom his guests in return. He had purchased the estate which he possessed about

ten years before Earlvin settled in the neighbourhood, but from what part he removed to it, was a secret which the curiosity of his rustic associates was unable to develope. He engaged the whole of his servants at the inn, where he arrived a few days before he took possession of his purchase, accompanied only by a female child about four years old. This girl was educated with the same eccentricity which marked his general conduct. She was allowed the enjoyment of no society but that of her guardian, and the persons employed in her education. She was beautiful, accomplished, and interesting, but a mere child in knowledge of the world, from which she had been most carefully secluded. It was seldom Mr. Osmond conceived it necessary to account for the manner in which she had been thrown on his protection, and when he did condescend to answer questions of this kind, which the raillery of his neighbours would sometimes produce, he merely declared she was distantly related to him, and consigned to his care by her parents, who were incapable of pro-

viding for her themselves. She was seldom seen by the few visitors who were entertained at his house, and never permitted to extend her walks beyond the boundary of her guardian's park. These arrangements were calculated to call forth the scandal of a country-town, but its effects were lost upon Osmond; he treated the various reports that were circulated to his disadvantage with the same supercilious contempt he did those by whom they were propagated. He was too proud either to contradict or resent them.

The intimacy that subsisted between him and Felix was of a nature somewhat different to that of common-place acquaintance. Osmond had once saved the life of Earlvin during a fishing-excursion, in which he was accidentally precipitated into the water, and rescued by the former from the most imminent danger. It was natural that this event should procure him a warm and general invitation to his neighbour's house, which he accepted with a willingness very

different from his usual manner. From this period, they were often in the habit of seeing each other: Osmond, however, was generally the visitor, for which, his situation as a single man, was accounted a sufficient apology.

It was a short time after Earlvin's recovery from the indisposition with which he had been confined, that one evening, in a conversation with Osmond alone, the former expressed some surprise that he had never been induced to enjoy the social comforts of a married life. The latter paused for some moments, as if doubtful of the answer he should make, but at length replied, "No one is more sensibly alive to the enjoyments of domestic society than myself. I have, my dear sir, a most powerful example of its felicity in this hospitable dwelling; yet you must be aware there are traits in the human mind: there are, I say, *peculiar* modes of thinking that a man may adopt (either from prejudice or experience), which are calculated to render the marriage-state miserable."

Earlvin listened with anxiety, and Osmond proceeded.

" However reclused my style of living may now be, yet, in early life, I was much engaged in the society of women, and obtained a knowledge of female manners, which, perhaps, first occasioned those resolutions of celibacy I have hitherto maintained. There may be *exceptions*, Mr. Earlvin, nay, I hope there are, to the opinions I have formed on the sex."

Earlvin was agitated; he thought upon his mother: he consoled himself, however, with the idea that there certainly were *exceptions*, when he reflected upon his wife.

" You have been a sufferer," said he; " pardon me, but the follies or guilt of an individual, may in some degree have rendered you unjust to the community. Many allowances are to be made for the frivolity and levity we too often observe in the female character.

Their education, the flattery of our sex, and the example of their own encourage it; yet you cannot but confess that they are often a mere veil to those bright and refulgent virtues, which the affections of a wife and the cares of a parent generally call into action."

"Mr. Earlvin," answered Osmond, "you are a husband and a father; your opinions on these points are just what they ought to be. I should be sorry, very sorry, that any observations of mine (and here he paused, while his eyes were fixed stedfastly upon his companion) should tend to alter them. At all events, my good friend, you are a happy man; a very happy man: your inexperience is an enviable blessing. You possess an amiable wife; yet how many men have considered themselves equally fortunate during half their life-time, but at last have suddenly discovered themselves to be disgraced and dishonoured! The arts and duplicity of women are incomprehensible. Have we not daily and public proofs of their volatility?

Do they not confirm, that neither time nor circumstances are obstacles to their passions? Are we not convinced, that those who have been virtuous for years, are liable to be seduced? that even an old gallant may supplant a young husband, and a youthful coxcomb elope with the mother of a family?"

Earlvin, although he felt grieved and angry at the illiberality of these remarks, experienced those sensations which they were intended to call forth. A something like conviction of their truth seemed to flash upon his mind; the natural jealousy of his temper was, in a slight degree, urged into action: he attempted to be composed, but his companion was too well acquainted with his infirmity to remain ignorant of its effects.

"Perhaps," he continued, "I may be too nice, too delicate on those points; at least, as a married man, I am certain they would destroy my happiness. My anxiety for the preserva-

tion of my honour would render me miserable; the idea, the mere idea, that it is in the power of a woman so cruelly to disgrace us is horrible, and the conviction that others have been guilty, whose external appearance has laid every claim to our confidence, certainly justifies a continual suspicion. A man may be the dupe of his wife's artifice, and an object of triumph to a false friend, while he considers himself secure in the affections of the one, and implicitly relies on the faith of the other." The entrance of Mrs. Earlvin put an end to this conversation: Mr. Osmond shortly after took his leave, and Felix retired to his study in a thoughtful and pensive humour.

Earlvin was a man of enlarged and refined understanding; he possessed a considerable knowledge of the world, and was wary and cautious in his conduct: but these qualities were no barriers to the effects of a passion that had been engendered in very early life, and which was susceptible of every trivial impression cal-

culated to call it into action. He determined to think no more of a conversation which his judgement, in many points, condemned. He felt grieved that a man, for whose abilities he had much esteem, should have made the observations to which he had just listened. Yet these resolutions were mere attempts at forgetfulness; his thoughts were continually recurring to Osmond's remarks; by degrees, he seemed to perceive some force in them; was distressed and unhappy in the conviction; wished the conversation had never taken place, and yet experienced some anxiety to renew it.

"He certainly was right," whispered Earlvin to himself, "with respect to the appearance of innocence, which often accompanies guilt in such cases: on that point he was perfectly correct. Many men have been disgraced in moments of apparent security; nor is there any great reliance to be placed upon the number of years a married couple may have lived together, even under the most perfect felicity. An un-

expected object sometimes appears, which so deludes, so infatuates, that these are certainly distressing reflections, but yet they may be very just ones."

Restless and unhappy, he quitted his study to join his family: he found his wife fondly caressing their children, who were taking their leave of her for the night. His heart was instantaneously dilated with joy; he gazed on the little group with ecstasy, shared in their embraces, and could have shed tears on their bosoms.

"I have often thought, my dear Julia," said Earlvin to his wife, the moment they were alone, "that an acute sensibility to the happiness we enjoy, is generally imbittered with poignant reflections on the uncertainty of its duration: the miser who counts his wealth with all the rapture his passion of avarice inspires, is perhaps a greater sufferer in his superfluity, than a de-

stitute man who has less value for what he so greatly needs."

"Yet would not such a man," answered his wife, "be more deserving of his felicity by grateful acknowledgements for the blessings which produce it, instead of melancholy forebodings on the future? Are not such anticipations rather the result of trembling anxiety for self-gratification, than perfect feelings of present enjoyment?"

Earlvin paused on this observation; it carried forcible conviction, but it seemed to convey a reproach: it displeased him, yet he was unable to express the cause of his displeasure; he was himself only sensible of the rebuke, because the consciousness of deserving it was confined within his own bosom.

Not many days elapsed after the interview between Osmond and Earlvin (which produced such powerful emotions in the latter), when he

was suddenly requested to visit a gentleman within a few miles of his house, on some urgent business relative to the purchase of an estate that was situated between their respective lands, and in which they had resolved to act jointly. He returned at a late hour; his wife had retired to her chamber, and the chief of the domestics were gone to bed. He took no supper, but proceeded immediately to a dressing-closet that joined his bed-room, and which communicated with it by a small pair of sash-doors. He gave his candle to his valet, who attended him as far as the entrance of the closet; a lamp was burning in his chamber, and he perceived his wife had not yet retired to rest. She was seated at a small dressing-table that was nearly opposite to the entrance through which Earlvin observed her. Her whole attention was occupied by a letter which she held in her hand. Earlvin remained some minutes in silent observation: her emotions during the perusal of it seemed to increase, till at length she burst into tears, and placed it precipitately with some other pa-

pers in the drawer from which he conjectured she had taken them. Felix still watched with anxiety, but she returned to the dressing-table no more. He knew not what to think of this circumstance; his ideas were confused and distressing: there was nothing uncommon or criminal in his wife possessing letters which he had never seen, yet there was a mystery in the opportunity she had chosen for reading of them, and the agitation their contents had occasioned. He at length entered the chamber; Mrs. Earlvin was composed, but evidently failed in her exertions to be cheerful. She asked various questions as to the result of the business on which he had been absent, but she seemed to pay little attention to the answers that were returned to them.

Earlvin passed a sleepless night in conjectures on the event he had witnessed: at times he resolved to declare to Julia that he had observed her unperceived, and request to know the cause of her uneasiness; but then, again, he revolted at the idea of confessing his feelings,

which would grieve her and disgrace himself. In the morning, during the time of his dressing, he took particular notice of the table as well as the drawer which belonged to it; he remarked that the latter had a lock, and seemed capable of containing a considerable quantity of papers. In the course of the morning, he formed an excuse for going into this room alone: he considered the drawer might be left open, and determined to examine its contents. He no sooner, however, entered the apartment than he felt conscious of the meanness of the action, and instantly quitted it without attempting the purpose of his visit. In this state of irresolution he remained some days, one moment resolving to satisfy his curiosity even at the hazard of an acknowledgement of his weakness, the next, ashamed and alarmed at the suspicions which tormented him, and forming resolutions to overcome them, by every possible exertion in his power. During one of these reveries, Dr. Sulfit was announced, who entering the apartment with a most obsequious bow, hoped the whole

family were well, while he was in full expectation, from a sudden change in the weather, to have found at least a part of them in want of his assistance. An arm-chair was immediately presented to the visitor, and some refreshment placed before him. The appearance of the doctor was somewhat grotesque, not from any prominent defect in his person, but in the *tout ensemble* of his figure and manner. He was below the middle size, rather inclined to corpulency, with a very large head and extreme slender legs. The extended appearance of the former was much increased by a full bushy wig, and the want of substance in the latter rendered more striking, by the black silk stockings which covered them. His face was of that description which is generally termed comic; his features, separately considered, were not remarkable, yet the countenance they formed would often provoke a smile. His eyes were dark and penetrating; his nose rather curved at the extremity, and his mouth very small, which he still farther contracted by his unwillingness to discover a

bad set of teeth: so that his articulation was continually accompanied by a hissing sound, which often divided his words, and rendered his meaning obscure. His usual dress was a snuff-coloured suit of old-fashioned make, and his general appendages a small three-cornered hat, and a long gold-headed cane. The doctor was habited in the above costume on the morning of his arrival at the Grove: he paid many compliments on the hospitality of the inhabitants, and the abilities of their cook, in the few intervals he allowed himself for conversation during his repast, and having concluded it, he seemed suddenly to recollect the business on which he had arrived; for it is but justice to observe, that whatever expectations Dr. Sulfit might have formed on the change of the weather, he had other motives in this visit than merely the distribution of his physic.

"An alarming accident has just happened at the residence of my very good friend Mr. Osmond,"

exclaimed the doctor; "his little recluse, as I call her, in my comical way, has had a very narrow escape from a watery grave. Always on the wing, light as a feather, she must needs be skipping into the little boat that my good friend has lately been painting and decorating, and which was moored to the banks of the river that runs through his pleasure-grounds, but having drifted the length of a few yards of rope from the land, the workmen had formed a communication by a narrow plank thrown across from the shore. During the time they were gone to their dinner, Miss Caroline, in the act of passing over it, slipped into the water, and was out of sight in an instant. Now this manner of falling into the water I will maintain, and, indeed, have maintained, in a small treatise I wrote some few years ago upon that subject"—

"But, my dear sir," exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Earlvin at the same moment, "the young lady; was any one near? Was she preserved?"

"She is safe, perfectly safe," answered the doctor; "young Herbert, the son of Sir William Herbert, whom you know very well; by the by, did not he put up for the county about two years ago?"

"I believe so," answered Earlvin; "but the lady, doctor: how did he manage to save the lady?"

"Why, sir," replied Sulfit, "he was passing in his father's little vessel near the spot at the time the accident happened, and very gallantly plunged in after the fair unfortunate, whom he soon bore in his arms to the shore. I, of course, was immediately sent for; very fortunately, had just returned from a few friendly visits at the moment the messenger arrived. Saw the young lady in less than a quarter of an hour; perceived the case in an instant; the functions suspended, but not destroyed: applied the means of renovation, and restored the patient."

" This accident," said Earlvin, " must have occasioned Mr. Osmond much alarm."

" Oh dear! no," answered the doctor; " Mr. Osmond has not yet heard of it: he is absent from home, and is not expected to return before the evening. Indeed this circumstance has, in part, occasioned me the honour of being your visitor this morning; for Miss Caroline, immediately on her recovery, expressed a very ardent desire to see our good lady here. She has no society, you know; my good friend is rather eccentric in these matters, but let that pass. I whispered in her ear that I would ride over to the Grove and inform you of her wishes. This promise was a sufficient guarantee for their gratification; for Miss Caroline (continued the doctor, with a very obsequious bow to Mrs. Earlvin) is not ignorant of that, with which the whole neighbourhood are so well acquainted, namely, the condescension and humanity of the lady who has the power to grant her request."

On the conclusion of this compliment, which the doctor had framed during his ride, he stretched forth his short neck with a peculiar kind of gesticulation, that generally accompanied the utterance of what he considered a *good thing*.

Mrs. Earlvin had only once seen the young lady to whom he alluded, and their interview was then merely casual, during a visit to Mr. Osmond, who never introduced his ward even to the few guests he entertained at his house. Her figure and manners had greatly interested Mrs. Earlvin, but the silence and reserve which Mr. Osmond always maintained with respect to his fair charge, precluded any request she might have been inclined to make as to a farther acquaintance. The favour which was now requested of her (under circumstances that rendered a refusal extremely distressing), she would gladly have avoided. Mr. Osmond's absence from home seemed to increase the appearance of curiosity she conceived her presence would imply. Yet to deny her aid on an occasion like

the present, would, she considered, be equally cruel and fastidious: her carriage was therefore immediately ordered, and the offer of Dr. Sulfit to escort her politely accepted.

On their arrival at Mr. Osmond's, Mrs. Earlvin was introduced into the chamber of the young lady by the doctor, who, with a smile of exultation, declared he would not be considered merely as a restorer of life, but one who administered comforts to make life valuable.

"This is extremely good of you, my dear madam," exclaimed the weeping Caroline, as she kissed the hand of her visitor; "indeed I more than once repented of the request which the doctor has so kindly conveyed to you, when I was sufficiently recovered to reflect upon the boldness of it."

"Pshaw, pshaw!" answered the doctor, with an air of authority which he had assumed the moment he entered the house; "I must have no

repentance now, but for the mad-cap trick which occasioned this accident, nor any reflections but on the providence of having escaped so well."

"And I," said Mrs. Earlvin, "will be answerable for Miss Almond's conduct on both these points, while I entreat she will consider me as a friend, whom her ceremony only can offend."

Caroline was unable to return her thanks; she pressed the hand of Mrs. Earlvin to her bosom, while the doctor was calculating her pulse on the other, with his cane under his chin, and his gold watch close to his ear.

The supple curve of the back, and simpering smile of the face, so prominent in Doctor Sulfit during his visit at Mr. Earlvin's, was now no longer to be perceived: he was erect, stately, and grave; he considered his patient little more than a domestic, and, in the absence of the master of the house, his dignity seemed inflated,

and his power augmented. As there were no hopes of an invitation to dinner, he very shortly took his leave, with a promise, however, of calling again in the evening.

Whatever interest Mrs. Earlvin might have experienced for Caroline Almond in their former interview, it was most materially increased during the present. Although the simple and unadorned child of nature, there was a delicacy in her manners, and an apparent sensibility in her feelings, which most forcibly appealed to the heart. She was just turned of seventeen; though not tall, she was elegantly formed; her eyes were dark and brilliant; the glow of health was diffused over her complexion, and the smile of innocence dimpled her cheek. Her education had been chiefly intrusted to a young woman whom Mr. Osmond engaged when Caroline was about seven years old. This lady was the widow of a naval officer; the death of her husband rendered some employment necessary for her subsistence, and she proved perfectly com-

petent to the task she had undertaken. She was amiable, accomplished, and good-tempered. Possessed of that natural sweetness of disposition which so greatly facilitates instruction, her young charge soon ceased to consider her in any other view than that of a beloved friend, and received her daily lessons of information with a delight which ensured improvement, while it formed a source of exquisite pleasure. Under the care of this excellent woman Caroline passed nine years of her life, when intelligence of the illness of her mother, who resided at Lisbon, occasioned a separation that was equally distressing to both. Mrs. Morrison, however, considered the indisposition of her parent as a call on her affections, over which the ties of interest and friendship should have no power: she therefore instantly resigned her situation, and made a far greater sacrifice to her feelings in parting with her beloved pupil.

From the society and instruction of Mrs. Morrison, Caroline had received a degree of polish

and information which is often superficially gleaned in a vortex of dissipation, that corrodes and destroys the more genuine parts of the human character. Without the vulgarisms of confined life, she possessed all the simplicity which in general results from it. Yet her judgement was neither matured by experience, nor her suspicions excited by example. The innocence of her own heart seemed a sufficient confirmation of the virtues of others; and the habit of considering every being as a friend, produced a confidence in the virtues of her fellow-creatures as dangerous to her repose as it was amiable and interesting in its nature. Caroline Almond was opening into life with all those warm and glowing sensations towards the objects that surrounded her which are often felt and enjoyed at her period of existence. Even the inanimate flower that scattered its sweets on her bosom, appeared to call forth her affections with its blossoms; it seemed grateful for the tenderness she bestowed upon it, and expanded its blushing leaves in the genial warmth of her protection.

The imagination is ever powerful when its wanderings are uninterrupted by external impressions. Caroline's general notions and opinions, although formed on the most pure principles of an uncorrupted heart, were often incorrect; while those, with less virtue, and more knowledge of the world, acquire powers of discrimination that may be considered as the best species of self-defence. Mrs. Earlvin consented to remain till the evening, and the strength and spirits of her young companion gradually increased.

" I am sure," she cried, " I shall not repent of the mad frolic I was guilty of this morning, with half the severity the doctor conceives necessary, when I reflect on the happiness which has resulted from it."

" Yet you are not without society," answered Mrs. Earlvin; " your guardian, Miss Almond, is a man of enlarged understanding; one

whose conversation is accounted equally instructive and amusing."

"He is my benefactor," replied Caroline with pensive earnestness: "I am indebted to him for the protection of a father; and I am aware he has a claim on my most fervent gratitude: yet I conceive there should be a confidence between us, that does not entirely exist. Indeed, my dear madam, I am not able to express my feelings on this subject. I am sensible they are acute, but I am incapable of giving them utterance."

"They are such," answered Mrs. Earlvin, "which I can both comprehend and admire, and while they create apprehensions for your tranquillity, render me more anxious for your happiness. You must endeavour to chase these reflections from your mind: although amiable in themselves, yet, under your present circumstances, they are not calculated to increase your felicity. Mr. Osmond may be somewhat re-

served in his manners, and perhaps more inclined to listen to your conversation than to excite it by his own; yet he may be equally gratified in your confidence as if he took more pains to procure it."

"I would acknowledge my obligations to him," exclaimed Caroline, "by a thousand little attentions it is my duty and inclination to bestow: but, his silence, his stern aspect, and cold replies, seem to chide all my advances to his favour. It is true, I am an orphan, friendless, and destitute, but for him; yet I have a heart full of tenderness and respect for his goodness: these feelings cannot be concealed, and the apathy which quells them is agonising."

At the conclusion of these words, Dr. Sulfit entered the apartment, and, having comfortably seated himself in an arm-chair, very readily agreed to partake of their tea.

"Tea is a bad thing," cried the doctor, "a

very bad thing; although I now and then take a cup to oblige my friends. I have written and said a great deal against it, I assure you."

The doctor was proceeding with a very learned and copious explanation of his objections to tea, to which his auditors politely attended, without understanding a single sentence of his meaning, when a servant announced, that Mr. Herbert had called to inquire after Miss Almond's health, and was waiting for an answer.

"He is my deliverer, my preserver!" exclaimed Caroline, with considerable animation; "surely I should see him, now I am capable of thanking him for his services?"

The question which these observations seemed to imply, as to the propriety of Mr. Herbert being introduced, neither of the visitors considered themselves authorised to answer, and the servant, in a few moments, conducted the gentleman to the drawing-room. However anxious

Caroline might have appeared to return him her thanks, yet she faltered in the utterance of them, while he, not entirely unembarrassed, expressed his happiness in finding her so far recovered, as to be absent from her chamber.

" Give me leave to remark, Mr. Herbert," said the doctor, with a smiling aspect of respectful attention, " that your looks indicate you had much better have kept within your own chamber this evening. I perceive, very plainly, you are a sufferer by your exertions; you have, imperceptibly, taken cold."

" I am sorry to contradict you, doctor," replied Herbert; " but I assure you, upon my honour, I was never in better health."

" Pardon me, sir," answered the doctor; " I have not the honour of your acquaintance, but I am interested in your welfare; you must not be the victim of your gallantry."

"Victim, sir!" exclaimed Herbert, with ardour; "I shall ever consider the moment, in which I was enabled to preserve the life of Miss Almond, as the most precious of my existence."

"Aye, aye, that is all very well," replied Dr. Sulfit; "but you are full of fever, my good sir."

Mrs. Earlvin and Caroline were astonished and alarmed. Young Herbert again attempted to assert his consciousness of being in perfect health, but was interrupted by the doctor. "My very good young friend," he exclaimed, "you must give me leave to be the best judge on these points; we shall soon get you to rights: a day or two's confinement, three or four powders, a few draughts, a little bark, and perhaps a blister on the back of your neck"——

"A blister!" cried Herbert, with a smile, which he now found it impossible to conceal:

" However, sir, that appears to be the last application, and perhaps, by the success of the others, may be rendered unnecessary."

" A blister is a very good thing," cried the doctor, " a most excellent thing; but, probably, we may contrive to do without it. I must send you some powders and a draught immediately on my return home. I shall see you at a very early hour in the morning; nay, I will do myself the honour of taking my breakfast with you. You see, sir, I venture on the freedom of a friend, because I do ardently wish to obtain that appellation."

Dr. Sulfit possessed a volubility of expression, particularly in those parts of his conversation which were dictated by his interest, that greatly facilitated his professional advancement. His commencement in life was marked by a resolution to make the most of every chance that fell in his way; he had neither modesty to counteract the effects of this resolution, nor delicacy

to hesitate on the operations it demanded: his understanding was sufficient to aid all his motives, but not powerful enough to make him feel their meanness.

The family of Sir William Herbert was one of the very few into which the doctor had not yet been admitted. All his attempts at an introduction had hitherto failed, but the accident that had now made him known to his son, seemed to hold forward a more favourable opportunity, and he resolved it should not pass without improvement. Sir William was at this time in London; young Herbert was his only child; and the doctor had sagacity enough to consider, that there was every thing to be expected from a parent thus situated. He, however, soon perceived, that the object of his designs was not easily to be duped into a belief of indisposition. Herbert seemed rather inclined to laugh at his observations than to encourage them; he therefore added to his plan of attack, a free and impertinent self-invitation to his house, which common politeness

rendered secure from refusal, and which made way, not only for himself, but for all the powders, draughts, and pills, that generally followed him.

Herbert had been a visitor at his father's residence for several weeks, in consequence of some splendid entertainments which Sir William had given to his neighbours on the former coming of age; and he was expected to return to Oxford (where he had been stationed for the last three years), immediately on the return of Sir William from London, who was at present detained there on some urgent law-business.

The figure of this young man was extremely prepossessing; he was tall, well-formed, and had a manly and intelligent countenance. His manners were rather diffident than familiar, and he appeared more given to reflection than conversation. Mr. and Mrs. Earlvin were but distantly acquainted with his father; they had both received cards of invitation to the fêtes which Sir

William had lately given, but had declined accepting them on account of Mr. Earlvin's health, who had recently recovered from his fever.

Dr. Sulfit had but just made his arrangements with his new patient, as to the physic he was to take, and the hour of breakfast next morning, when Mr. Osmond's return was announced, and he, in a few minutes, entered the apartment in which the visitors were assembled. Although he had heard of the accident that had happened from his servants, as he alighted from his horse, yet he was unable to conceal his displeasure. He welcomed his guests with a forced smile of politeness; while his vexation was visible to the whole party. Towards his ward he did not attempt to disguise his ill-humour, but complained of her imprudence with an asperity equally cruel and unjust.

Herbert immediately rose to depart. Mr. Osmond, with distant civility, thanked him for

his services, but neither requested him to lengthen his visit nor renew it.

Dr. Sulfit took his leave at the same time, and Mrs. Earlvin only waited for her carriage, which she had ordered to return in the evening. Her tenderness and anxiety for Caroline, whom the severity of Osmond had alarmed and terrified, was expressed by every affectionate attention she was capable of bestowing, while her surprise and displeasure at the behaviour of her guardian was equally perceptible. Mr. Osmond appeared now in some degree to relent; he apologised to Mrs. Earlvin for his impetuosity; addressed himself with more kindness to his ward; and declared, his alarm in reflecting on the consequences that might have resulted from her imprudence, was the cause of his anger.

"There is not a man in the county," he exclaimed, "from whom an obligation could be more distressing to me, than the one who has preserved your life. I have hitherto avoided

as much as possible the visits of the family, because I have always disliked them; but this unfortunate event will give them an inlet to my house, and a claim on my hospitality, which I shall be necessitated to answer, however irksome to my feelings."

"Sir William Herbert," replied Mrs. Earlvin, "is, I believe, generally admired and respected by his neighbours. I must confess, I speak more from report than personal knowledge; yet this method of becoming acquainted with his character, would, perhaps, have been the most likely to have discovered his demerits."

"Pardon me, madam," answered Osmond, with a smile, which generally accompanied his conversation to Mrs. Earlvin, "but there are men, whose insatiable thirst for popularity, renders them so far masters of their passions and actions, as to suppress the one and control the other, where their effects would interfere with the purity of their acquired reputation. I do

not pretend to say, that Sir William's conduct has been such as entirely to make good this assertion, yet the eagerness he has evinced to stand high in the esteem of all ranks, certainly creates suspicions, that he must have made some sacrifices for the purpose."

The malice and ill-nature of these insinuations did not escape Mrs. Earlvin; her opinions of Osmond underwent a considerable revolution, from the observations she made during this visit; she had hitherto considered him rather as a melancholy recluse, than a malignant defamer: she was aware that he possessed the confidence of her husband, and she experienced some little alarm and uneasiness from the recollection of their intimacy. The terror and restraint of Caroline in his presence were testimonies of his general behaviour towards her, while the mystery of his guardianship, and the peculiar manner in which he performed it, created in Mrs. Earlvin the most powerful sympathy for his unfortunate ward. On her departure, she gave her a very warm invitation to

her house. Caroline's gratitude beamed in her eyes as she pressed Mrs. Earlvin's hand to her lips, but she seemed fearful of accepting the offer that occasioned her such delight, while Osmond remained silent and impatient to hand his guest to her carriage.

Mrs. Earlvin's mind, during her ride home, was entirely occupied in reflecting on the captivating manners of Caroline Almond, and the traits she had discovered in the character of her guardian.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST SUFFERINGS OF JEALOUSY.

Mrs. Earlvin, on her return home, related to her husband the particulars of her visit. He listened to her with attention, and perfectly acquiesced in her opinions.

He had been occupied, during her absence, in solitary reveries on the events that had lately called into action the strongest passion of his soul. From his marriage, to the period at which this history commences, he had encountered no circumstances of a nature to rouse its energies. His reclused style of living had confined his society to very narrow limits; he had met with no variety of objects from which

some might have been selected with accomplishments to excite his envy, and inclinations to create his alarm. He had not a single acquaintance of this description, and the conduct of his wife was such as the most fastidious husband must have approved. Yet, in a situation thus favourable to his happiness, he possessed feelings so sensitive, so tremblingly alive to certain impressions, that the most trivial occurrences were capable of producing very powerful effects. The anxiety of a high-spirited youth for the honour of his father, his sensations of shame and agony for the disgrace of his mother, were now blended in the bosom of a husband; the impositions on the credulity of one parent, by the artful duplicity of the other, were deeply rooted in his memory, and his dread of being exposed to similar injuries, kept him in continual fear of the same perfidy. Earlvin's affection for his wife was unequivocally proved by his marrying of her; his love triumphed over those considerations of cautious policy, which, under other circumstances, had ever ruled his conduct. There

were impediments to the union that would have urged one with less ardour, and not half his prudence, to have given it up. The object of his choice had neither fortune nor expectations: her birth was mysterious, and her family unknown, except by the man who called himself her father, and whose veracity on that point was by many considered as doubtful. Her virtues, which so conspicuously shone amidst the dangers that surrounded her, secured the heart of Earlvin. It is true, the beauty of her person, and the fascination of her manners, were the first objects of his attention, but they would not have been sufficient to have subdued his prejudices. When the death of her father urged her to resign herself to his protection, he generously resolved to place her above the malice of the world, by giving her a just and honourable title to his exertions. When he beheld her the mother of a family, his affections were increased to enthusiasm; his anxiety for her health, and his attentions to her happiness, were those which

the most ardent love could only have inspired. Yet these feelings were no barriers to his jealousy; the more he estimated the value of the blessing he possessed, the more eagerly he desired to preserve it. He would often gaze upon his children as they clung to him in the sportive endearments of infancy with all the rapture and delight of a parent, while the next moment would produce sensations of anguish and agony. These bewildered wanderings of the imagination, that generally succeeded a consciousness of his felicity, were also the imperceptible agents of his passion; one sensation was the direct cause of the other: the ecstasy of present enjoyment, called forth his anticipation of future sufferings.

At an early hour the following morning, young Herbert was announced at the Grove. There was a degree of embarrassment in his manner, which implied a consciousness that his visit must have been unexpected, and his anxi-

ety to explain his motives, scarcely allowed him time to make the usual salutations which good breeding required.

" I have taken the liberty," he said, " to trouble you with inquiries after Miss Almond's health, which, perhaps, politeness should have prompted me to make at her own residence ; but as I was passing your door in my way to Monmouth, where I am required at an early hour on business that may probably detain me the whole day, I flattered myself you would excuse this intrusion."

There was a formality and hesitation in this apology, very different from Herbert's general mode of address : although neither himself nor his father were upon terms of intimacy with Mr. Earlvin, yet they were both sufficiently known to him, as to render an explanation for a visit of this kind unnecessary. He was of course received with cordiality, and informed of Caroline's perfect recovery. During the short time he re-

mained at the Grove, he several times addressed himself to Mrs. Earlvin on the accident that had occasioned their meeting the day before, and spoke with considerable warmth of the friendly attentions which Caroline had received from her. On his departure, he gave them an invitation to the house of his father, who, he declared, would be proud and happy to consider them as his friends. He had no sooner quitted the apartment, than Mrs. Earlvin bestowed many encomiums upon his person and manners. Her opinions, open, candid, and liberal, were generally delivered with animation; the purity of her thoughts prevented all hesitation in their expression; the sentiments she delivered were those of her heart, they neither required a cautious examination nor a fearful utterance. Her husband listened to her without answering; his silence proceeded from inquietude: her admiration of the young man who had just left them rendered him gloomy and thoughtful; he considered, if he had ever heard her speak so highly of any man before; he thought he had;

the recollection was soothing: but were they young, handsome in their persons, and prepossessing in their manners? certainly not. These reflections were tormenting; he became fretful, rose from his chair, paced the room, and complained of the head-ache.

Earlvin had hitherto met with so few events calculated to excite his jealousy, that he had, in a great degree, succeeded in concealing from his wife those emotions which, in the midst of his happiness, he sometimes experienced. Various were the causes she alleged for the trivial and momentary alterations in his temper she sometimes perceived: whether she considered them as originating from slight indisposition, or those little disappointments that so often cross the inclinations and disturb the tranquillity of those who are unacquainted with greater evils, she was always ready to soothe, without attempting to discover the cause of his uneasiness. This conduct, under Earlvin's present circumstances, was fully competent to restore him to his usual good hu-

mour; in her endearments, his dark and wandering thoughts were dissolved; he instantaneously felt his blessings, and enjoyed them.

Mrs. Earlvin had hitherto respected Osmond as the friend of her husband, but his severity towards his orphan ward, which she had lately discovered, called forth a degree of resentment she seldom evinced. She felt little inclination to renew her visit to Caroline; for, though greatly pleased with her manners, and interested in her welfare, she must have purchased the pleasure of her society, at the expense of witnessing her distress. It was these considerations that urged her to request her husband to call on Mr. Osmond the next morning with an excuse for the promise she had made the evening before, and an invitation for Caroline to the Grove.

Earlvin found Mr. Osmond alone, and briefly repeated his commission.

"My good friend," answered the latter, with a smile which he could always assume, "there

is not a family in this neighbourhood with whom I should feel more gratification in forming a society for my ward, than your own; yet, at present, we shall be unable to avail ourselves of your kind invitation: we leave Monmouthshire to-morrow."

Earlvin was astonished. Osmond was busily engaged in folding some papers, and did not remove his eyes from his employment.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the visitor; "this is a sudden arrangement: an excursion to the north, I suppose."

"No," replied Osmond, "we are going to London."

Earlvin's surprise increased, but he repelled his curiosity, and changed the conversation.

Osmond struggled to appear composed, but was evidently disconcerted; he mentioned the con-

fusion which the accident of the day before had occasioned, with much ill-humour; and though he had already observed, that the events which occasioned his leaving the country for a few weeks had occurred before his return home the last evening, yet his manner indicated, that this circumstance was, in part, the cause of his sudden arrangements.

Dr. Sulfit now entered the room; there was a degree of gloom and disappointment in his countenance, which neither his servility, nor smirking gesticulation, could conceal. He adjusted his wig, and twirled his cane, with a peculiar kind of convulsive motion he generally adopted when silenced by the presence of those before whom he was afraid to complain. After his usual compliments, and observations on the state of the atmosphere, the height of the barometer, and sundry other remarks (which the doctor as regularly introduced, when he found conversation at a low ebb, as he did his bark and powders, to restore those patients who had

not a complaint to communicate), he ventured to touch slightly on one of the subjects which had occasioned his uneasiness. " I presume, sir," said he, addressing himself to Mr. Osmond, " from what has just been mentioned to me by my patient above, that we are about to lose you for a short time."

" I am going to London, doctor," answered Osmond, " and my return is uncertain."

" Miss Caroline, I presume, attends you, sir."

" Yes, we set off to-morrow morning early."

" Well, well; business, I suppose," continued Dr. Sulfit: " business must be attended to; yet I am bold to confess, I could have wished my young patient might have taken a few more draughts; there is a small degree of fever, a little irritation, in the system."

"She may put a dozen or two in her portmanteau," interrupted Osmond; "they will keep, I suppose."

The countenance of the apothecary now became irresistibly comic; his attempts to conceal the chagrin which this abrupt reply occasioned, added to the doubts he entertained, whether he was to consider it as a serious observation, or a satirical retort, at once ruffled the composure which his self-confidence usually inspired.

"As to their keeping," he replied, with a simper of forced pleasantry, "you must pardon me, sir, if I make bold to observe, that my draughts are prepared for immediate use."

"And so are mine," answered Osmond, presenting him, at the same time, with an order on his banker for the amount of the last bill he had delivered; yet there is one, doctor, which you may use either now or three months hence, and

I will answer for the effects being equally satisfactory."

Although the manner in which these words were uttered gave the doctor to understand, that any farther observations on the subject would be superfluous and unwelcome, yet the prospect of thus suddenly closing an account, that was not perhaps calculated for very nice inspection, gave him some consolation, and, in a certain degree, restored his good-humour. The doctor bowed obsequiously, and the conversation became general.

" I had an early visitor this morning," said Earlvin, " to inquire after your patient, doctor; young Herbert favoured us with a call just as we had concluded our breakfast."

This observation seemed rather an unfortunate one; for not only the face of the doctor was again clouded, but Mr. Osmond appeared chagrined and angry.

" It is astonishing to me," said he, " that Sir William encourages that young man to absent himself for such long periods from his studies: such indulgences are pernicious."

" With him, at least," answered Earlvin, " we may claim an exception; he is, I believe, generally admired."

" By the women," returned Osmond, with a malicious smile of exultation, that played upon his countenance, as he observed the effects which his remark produced on that of his friend.

Earlvin was, indeed, both astonished and disconcerted at the reply; it seemed to convey an imputation on his character which he had never suspected.

" I know but little of him," replied Felix, " but must confess his appearance and manners are prepossessing."

" Aye, aye," returned Osmond, " those are qualifications often used for the worst purposes; they are a trade-stock to the idle, the extravagant, and the vicious."

Dr. Sulfit listened with attention to these remarks, and now considerd himself at liberty to make a few complaints of his own. The intended departure of his patient was not the only event which had tended to disconcert and irritate the doctor.

" I must really make bold to observe," said he, " with all due respect to our worthy neighbour, Sir William Herbert, that the young gentleman, his son, does not exactly imitate the discreet and polite conduct of his father. During his visit here yesterday morning, I perceived certain symptoms in his appearance which made me a little apprehensive for his health. I merely wished him to confine himself for a short time, and take a small quantity of medicine; it was agreed I should breakfast with him this morning;

on my arrival, however, I found he had left home early, while a verbal apology for his absence, and some hot rolls and butter, were handed to me nearly at the same moment."

"Then he had not forgot your breakfast, doctor," said Osmond, "however he might have run away from your physic."

"I cannot conceive," replied Sulfit, rather piqued at the observation, "why people should have such an objection to physic: the poor fellow who waited on me, required it as much or more than his master, though he had no suspicion of it himself till I told him so. The draughts I had in my pockets were fortunately as suited to his case as if they had been prepared for him. I therefore made him swallow one by way of a sample before I quitted the house, and left him the remainder to take at his leisure. I must, however, be bold to confess (continued the doctor, elevating his head, and again adjusting his wig), I felt somewhat hurt at young Mr.

Herbert's neglect, which I dare to say my manner indicated when I just now met him on his return."

"Met him on his return?" exclaimed Earlvin; "why, I understood he was going to Monmouth on urgent business."

"It seems, sir," replied the doctor, "that his urgent business, whatever it might be, was concentrated in his visit to your house; for which he has endangered his own health, and forfeited his appointment with me."

"Concentrated in his visit to my house?" echoed Earlvin, in a tone which electrified the doctor, and surprised Mr. Osmond; "what business, sir, could he have at my house, but that which he acknowledged and explained?"

Poor Sulfit, to whom this was an unfortunate morning, beheld the flushed cheek and angry eye of Earlvin with alarm and astonishment; he beg-

ged pardon, yet knew not the offence he had committed; although his apology was a confession of his error. In short, unable to conquer his confusion, he suddenly seized his hat and cane, and, with an obsequious bow, took his leave. Too much disconcerted to make any more visits, he returned home to the only enjoyment he had now left for the remainder of the day, that of making his wife and domestics as miserable as himself.

Before the doctor had quitted the apartment, Earlvin became sensible of his folly; but the former was too much taken up with his apologies, and too desirous to depart, either to listen or wait for explanation. With Osmond, however, he had a more subtle observer of his conduct, and it was in vain he attempted to conceal from him the cause of his emotion. Osmond was one of those characters in which considerable talents were blended with powerful and dangerous propensities. A warm and trembling interest in his own gratifications, with a total apathy and indif-

ference to the happiness of others, formed the basis of all his proceedings, and constituted the business of his life. Slow, cautious, and reflecting in all his actions, every word and movement was the result of consideration, and aimed at some future effect. Yet, with all this crafty hesitation and designing policy, there was an undaunted effrontery in his manners that carried the appearance of sincerity, and to which he was often more indebted than to his finesse. Osmond was a man neither necessitated by his passions or circumstances to study the opinions of the world; the few individuals on whom he exerted his powers of duplicity, were those capable of yielding to him, in some way or other, gratifications equal to the trouble they cost him. With the generality of mankind, he took little pains to conciliate either respect or affection, while his uncouth rudeness was often mistaken for rough honesty and blunt declamation. This was not the first discovery he had made of Earlvin's jealousy; but, till the present period, he had never perceived that it fell on any

particular object. His satisfaction was equal to his surprise; he was conscious of his capability to excite so inflammatory a passion from the most weak and trivial grounds. Although not very susceptible to the charms of female beauty, yet his inclinations, when once raised, were sufficiently powerful to urge him on any expedient, however daring or atrocious. Nor was his disposition of that nature which required the prospect of immediate gratification to stimulate exertion. He would coolly calculate on the probability of success, however distant, and, with gradual and subtile industry, work towards the end he was desirous to attain. He was forcibly struck with the beauty of Earlvin's wife the first moment he beheld her; and the softness and delicacy of her manners, although so opposite to his own, after a few interviews, inspired him with a passion as criminal as it was hopeless. He was well aware of the dangerous precipice on which he stood. By his preservation of Earlvin's life, he had acquired a claim on his gratitude and hospitality which he failed not to improve, by, in some degree, de-

parting from his general mode of behaviour. During his intimacy at their house, he anxiously watched the rise and progress of every little domestic event that tended to develope the minute traits of their characters. Sometimes he would start peculiar subjects in conversation, calculated to call forth arguments, and opinions, likely to illustrate their most secret thoughts and inclinations. Yet all this artifice and exertion produced only a series of discoveries on the goodness of their hearts, and a conviction of the improbability that his speculations would ever prove successful. Osmond, although a patient and indefatigable labourer for his pleasures, was on the point of giving up a pursuit that promised not even a glimmering of hope, when he, one evening, while a guest at Earlvin's fire-side, fancied he perceived in him symptoms of jealousy. The circumstances which led to this discovery were of a very trifling nature, but they were sufficient to form a basis for anticipation and experiment. He was soon convinced his conjectures were just, and he resolved to

act upon them whenever an opportunity offered. The intimacy that subsisted between them produced many private conversations; he failed not to take advantage of these periods, and, by the most consummate art and address, contrived, imperceptibly, to irritate and inflame the mind of Earlvin, while he pretended the most sincere and disinterested friendship. During their last interview, however, he discovered a feature of the passion he had long anxiously expected to behold. There now appeared an individual on whom Felix seemed inclined to rest those tormenting suspicions which, at intervals, raged in his bosom. Hitherto the wild and incongruous fancies that had assailed him, were soon conquered by the exertions of his own reason, and the gentle soothings of his wife. The folly of his conduct was rendered evident, even to himself, when he could not recollect a single being that seemed calculated or inclined to disturb his repose. Very different effects were now to be expected: the youth, the person, and the manners of Herbert, were likely to render him, in the eyes of the infatuated Earl-

vin, an object of caution and distrust. Osmond's artful insinuations increased his alarm, and gave rise to notions which awfully threatened his happiness. His attempts to appear composed, after the departure of Dr. Sulfit, were ineffectual; he therefore took his leave, and slowly returned towards his own house. During his walk, he had time to collect his thoughts, and reflect on his intemperate behaviour towards the doctor, and the causes that had produced it. These kind of reflections in Earlvin had generally tended to one conclusion; a consciousness of his own weakness and error. In the present instance, however, the effects were not precisely the same: it is true he was grieved in having, even for a moment, experienced thoughts injurious to the character of his beloved Julia; he was vexed and angry at having so ridiculously betrayed his feelings; but still his reverie, as in former cases, did not end here. The young man who had occasioned his uneasiness, he understood to be of a character, in which suspicions of this kind were

in some degree warranted. He might become a visitor at his house; it was not the present innocence of his wife that was to render her invulnerable to future temptation; the thought was agonising, and he determined to avoid Herbert with the most scrupulous care. To this point his mind was immediately directed, and various were the plans which presented themselves as most likely to answer his purpose, without alarming Julia, or exciting the ridicule of his acquaintance. At length one method occurred to him, that seemed calculated, in every respect, to fulfil his wishes. He had lately received a letter from his solicitor in London, mentioning that some law business, relative to certain estates in Cornwall (which had been purchased by his late grandfather), would shortly require his presence in town. Mrs. Earlvin, on the receipt of the letter, had laughingly offered to accompany him. This was an opportunity to escape a further intimacy with Herbert, which Felix immediately resolved to embrace; and, on his return home, after having

mentioned Osmond's intended journey on the following morning, he suddenly proposed to his wife that they should follow him.

"You know, Julia," he continued, "it is uncertain how long I may be detained; we have already had a proof of the insufferable tediousness of these law concerns, and the present one does not promise greater dispatch."

Mrs. Earlvin was astonished at this sudden proposal. "I could not be happy, Felix," she replied, "in leaving our children behind us to the care of the servants; and, to take them with us, would require an establishment equally unnecessary and expensive for the short time we might remain in London."

This hesitation displeased her husband; his chagrin was too evident to escape the anxious and inquiring eyes of Mrs. Earlvin. "I flattered myself, Julia," said he, "that the few trivial inconveniences that might perhaps have

resulted from this journey, would not have been considered as objections of sufficient consequence to disappoint me in the arrangements I had planned for it, in which your comfort and enjoyment were equally considered with my own."

"Good God!" exclaimed Mrs. Earlvin, "can you conceive I mentioned them with any such motive? If our company, in this excursion, will give you pleasure, I will immediately make the necessary preparations for it."

"There is something unkind in that observation, Julia. Why ask me if *your* company and that of my *children* will give me pleasure? Has not my conduct always evinced, that your society was preferable to any other?"

"Well," returned Mrs. Earlvin, "we will be ready to attend you to-morrow, if you please."

"Nay, nay," answered her husband, "do

not let me impose this journey on you as a task; if you prefer remaining here, for Heaven's sake, follow your inclinations."

"My inclinations," replied Julia, "are to make you happy, Felix. I know not how it is, but I have lately been unfortunate in my exertions on this point."

"Aye, aye," interrupted Earlvin, "now your temper fails you: I shall say no more."

"My spirits fail me," answered his wife; "yet, I am sure, I had never greater need of them."

The tears started from her eyes as she uttered these words, and rose to leave the room. Earlvin suddenly seized her hand, and detained her; he was almost unable to speak himself. "Why this uneasiness?" he cried, in a faltering voice; "I meant not to distress you. I merely intended to observe——"

" What your meaning might be, Felix," replied his wife, " I am unable to define; but your observations were somewhat unkind."

" Nay, nay, you mistake me," answered Earlvin; " you consider my words in too serious a light."

His wife gazed upon him earnestly: there was an expression in her countenance which Earlvin had never before observed; he was unable to conceal the emotions it occasioned, and his eyes were fixed on the ground, while a sense of his injustice crimsoned his cheeks. " I know not, Felix," said Julia, in a weak and tremulous voice, " to what cause I am to refer the irascible and uncomfortable feelings which have lately seemed to disturb you; if there is any concealed circumstance that renders you unhappy, have I not a sufficient claim on your confidence to share in the knowledge of it? I would be a partaker, my dear Felix, in your sorrows, that you might de-

rive consolation from the tenderness and sympathy of one who loves you. Have I not soothed you in the hours of pain and sickness? Believe me, a wounded mind is susceptible of the same aid; there is not a being in existence to whom you have so great a right to look for relief as myself; and surely I need not express the joy I should feel in being able to administer it."

Earlvin made every exertion to stifle his emotions, and was going to reply, when the eldest of their children suddenly entered the room, and, running up to his mother, anxiously inquired the cause of her uneasiness.

" I am sure," exclaimed the child, while his own eyes were filled with tears, " you would not cry without a reason; for you have often, very often, told me it was wrong to do so."

" That is very true, Charles," answered his mother, while she returned his caresses in an agony of weeping.

" There, now," continued the boy, " you cry more than ever, and yet I know you are not naughty."

" We are all of us wrong, sometimes," answered his mother.

" Yes, all except you and my father," replied the child.

" And why not we as well as others?" asked Earlvin.

" Because," he replied, " I love you both so dearly; I never can believe you act wrong."

This was an observation of infant innocence, but it struck forcibly on the heart of Earlvin. He pressed the boy to his bosom with enthusiasm, and held forth his hand to his wife as a pledge of reconciliation.

The child clambered up his knee, and, ex-

tending his little arms, encircled them both as well as he was able in his embrace. Their emotions were equally powerful, as he alternately imprinted on their cheeks the kisses of infantile affection.

Earlvin, during the remaining part of the day, made several attempts to convince his wife, that the apprehensions she had expressed relative to his uneasiness of mind were totally void of foundation. He flattered himself he had, in a great measure, succeeded in this point, but he still determined on the journey he first proposed. Mr. Osmond called in the afternoon with a pretended apology from his ward to Mrs. Earlvin, for not visiting her before her departure. Julia received him with coolness, while her husband appeared more than usually gratified by his company.

Their intended journey was mentioned to him by Felix with a request that he would provide them a house near his own residence. Osmond seemed much pleased with the information, and

promised to arrange every thing for their comfort and accommodation.

" Our good lady," said he, the moment Mrs. Earlvin left them alone, " does not appear so elated with this little excursion you have planned for her, as we might have expected."

" She has various fears, and much anxiety," answered Earlvin, " for her family."

" But you have reconciled those points, by taking them with you," replied Osmond.

" True, but my determination on this journey was rather sudden, and has, I believe, caused a little derangement in the household affairs."

" I should have conceived the pleasure of accompanying you to London would have balanced against any little inconvenience it might have occasioned in other respects; but, excuse me, this is no concern of mine: we cannot ac-

count for the fancies and inclinations of the ladies."

"At all events," said Earlvin, while his features assumed a smile which but ill accorded with his feelings, "they must not look to you for their defence; you are a *single man*, Osmond."

"Yes, thank Heaven, and am resolved to remain so."

"Say not too much on that subject."

"I will only say," returned Osmond, "that I should deserve what it is most likely I should suffer, were I to marry."

"Nay, nay, you are certainly too severe on the women; we have talked on this subject, you know, before."

"True," replied Osmond, "and I have

always made the same assertions; which proves at least that my opinions are not changeable."

"Is there not," said Earlvin, "great felicity to be derived from our children?"

"If they *are* our own," replied Osmond.

Earlvin seemed alarmed and uneasy. "Aye," continued Osmond, "and even if they are *not*, provided we are ignorant of the fact."

Earlvin became still more agitated.

"Upon my soul, Osmond," he exclaimed, "you either must have suffered much from the duplicity of the sex, or the severity of your opinions might be construed into something like cruelty."

"I never suffered from any of them," said Osmond; "I never gave them an opportunity, either to impose on my credulity, or agonise my feelings."

" Then why this rancour and ill-nature?"

" Because I have beheld their effects on my friends."

" Indeed!"

" Aye, while the poor devils have supposed themselves perfectly secure."

" At least, they were happy in their ignorance."

" Yes, but the laughing-stock of all who knew them."

Earlvin rose from his seat and paced the room with much inquietude.

" Still," continued Osmond, as he artfully watched the emotions of his friend, " there are no doubt some virtuous and amiable women. *Some*, though but a few perhaps, with which

a man might be tolerably comfortable: and, indeed, as you just observed, if he is even disgraced, provided he is not conscious of it, he may still be considered as happy in himself, although, in the eyes of the world, he must appear the most contemptible of human beings."

The colour in Earlvin's cheeks alternately faded and glowed as he listened to these remarks; it was impossible for him to conceal his agitation, while his answers were such as confirmed he knew not what he said. His embarrassment was, in some degree, relieved by the entrance of a neighbour who called on a morning visit. Osmond now took his leave, and promised to execute Earlvin's commission in London, immediately he arrived there; while the latter promised to leave Monmouthshire in the course of two days.

Mrs. Earlvin was busily employed during the following morning in preparing for their journey, and her husband was closely engaged with the pa-

pers that formed an excuse for it. In the evening, however, he prepared to take his usual walk, when his eldest boy followed him with a message from his mother, to know at what time he intended to be at home.

Earlvin was rather surprised at this question; he was in the habit of taking long walks, and Julia had never before expressed a wish to know the precise time of his return. He mused on this circumstance during his walk, and his usual train of reflections were produced. His mind was become so susceptible to the passion which pervaded it, that every little occurrence, in which his wife was concerned, that did not exactly accord with the daily events to which he had been accustomed, was formed into a subject for gloomy suspicion. He resolved to return earlier than the time he had mentioned; so great was his agitation and suspense, that he was scarcely absent an hour, and even during that period he hovered about the boundaries of his grounds, watching every avenue and turning

which led to the house. No longer able to endure his own feelings, he hurried home, and proceeded directly to the sitting room, in which he found his wife in conversation with a gentleman, whose person the dusk of the evening at first prevented him from discovering, but whose voice, to his astonishment and confusion, confirmed him to be young Herbert. It was fortunate that a sufficient time elapsed before candles were brought into the apartment, for Earlvin to recover in some degree from the chagrin and agitation he experienced. Felix understood he had been at the Grove at least half an hour, and he seemed in earnest conversation with Julia at the moment he entered the room. After a few common-place observations, to which Earlvin made short and sullen replies, Herbert took his leave.

"He appears a most excellent young man!" exclaimed Mrs. Earlvin, the moment he had quitted the apartment.

"I am of a contrary opinion," answered her

husband; but observing his child was in the room he proceeded no farther.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Julia; "I am sure he appears amiable."

"It signifies not what he *appears*," replied Felix.

"But are you sure," said Mrs. Earlvin, "your opinions are well founded?"

"I do not think, Julia, you have any cause to doubt my opinions being correct: I have not often been deceived, though I have sometimes hazarded much on their speculation."

Whatever Earlvin's meaning might have been in this reply, Julia instantly considered it as an indirect reproach on the situation from which he had married her. She struggled to suppress her tears, and hurried out of the apartment. The child, who was too much engaged with his own

amusements to observe his mother's emotions, still remained, while his father, agonized with various feelings, continued on the sofa upon which he had first thrown himself.

" Are you not well?" exclaimed the child, as he fondly caressed him.

" Not very well, my dear," answered Earlvin; " I am fatigued with walking, and want some sleep: how is it, Charles, you are not yet gone to bed?"

" If you are ill," he replied, " I will tell you a secret to make you better. I will tell you why mamma wanted to know exactly when you would return from your walk."

" Indeed!" answered Earlvin with peculiar animation; " can you tell me that, Charles?"

" Yes, indeed, I can," said the boy; " mamma told me not to mention it, but I am

sure she will not blame me, as I do it to make you better: and I see, by your countenance, the very thought of it has done you good already."

Earlvin's agitation increased; he expected every instant to hear from the innocent prattle of his child a confirmation of the wild and ridiculous surmises which tormented him.

"You must know, then," continued the boy, while his lips were placed close to his father's ear, and the infatuated parent listened to him with trembling anxiety, "you must know this is my birth-day, which you never thought of, or I am sure you would have kissed me, as I remember you did last year; so mamma said she would surprise you to-night with your favourite supper, roasted pigeons; and more than that, I am to sit up and have some too; and more than that, you was not to know a word about the matter; and so I asked you what time you would come home, that the supper might be cooked

just as you liked it; and so, this is the secret, and now I hope you are a great deal better."

Earlvin felt a rebuke in this information more powerful than the most bitter reproaches could have produced. He had misconstrued an act of affectionate kindness, and rewarded the exertions which had been made to please him, with a degree of ill-temper bordering on brutality. He felt degraded by the absurdity and meanness of his suspicions as they now appeared to him, and was grieved at the uneasiness they had occasioned his wife. He hurried from the apartment to make some excuse to her for his conduct, to ask her forgiveness, and soothe her distress. Before, however, he reached her dressing room, he recollected the earnest conversation in which she was engaged with Herbert. He paused for a few moments; his alarm, in some degree, returned; he walked slowly back to the parlour he had just quitted, and resolved, for the present, to defer his concessions. Julia's unea-

siness was evident when she appeared at supper; her eyes were inflamed with weeping, and her spirits considerably depressed. Felix, unable to witness her unhappiness without the most poignant regret, attempted, by various little attentions, to restore her to her usual serenity and cheerfulness. His exertions, however, were unsuccessful, and the playful vivacity of their child not only failed to interest his father, but, at intervals, increased the tears of his mother. Mrs. Earlvin, on this evening, perceived in Felix symptoms of jealousy which in a great measure accounted for the alteration she had of late observed in his temper and manners. Many women, on a discovery of this nature, would have felt little uneasiness or alarm; the idea of having sufficient power over the passions of a husband as to be enabled to regulate his happiness, would in some wives have produced exulting gratification, rather than anxiety and sorrow. Not so with Julia Earlvin; her affections were of a nature that rendered his confidence and good opinion the principal objects of her at-

tainment. The unfortunate circumstances under which she had been brought up occasioned her to be cautious and tenacious on this point. It had ever been her pride to prove to the world that she was not unworthy of the opinions her husband must have formed upon her character, before he could have ventured on their union. If Julia so ardently desired to impress upon the world such sentiments, how much more must she have wished that they should be confirmed to him who was the cause of them! Her mortification and disappointment when she discovered her failure, may be easily conceived. Instead, however, of giving way to resentment, she resolved to soothe and conciliate; instead of setting her husband's happiness at defiance, by assuming a gaiety foreign to her heart, she resolved to be still more wary in her conduct, and take every opportunity to quell his apprehensions, without even pretending to a knowledge of them. She commenced these operations immediately, by relating to Earlvin (as soon as the child had quitted the apartment), the subject of the con-

versation in which she had been engaged with Herbert. Felix now understood, with shame and confusion, how greatly he had wronged his wife.

Herbert, charmed by the person and manners of Caroline Almond, with all the warmth and impetuosity of youthful passion, made up his mind that he loved her. The character of this young man was tinged with a degree of romantic ardour that often led him into errors, from which a good heart, and strong understanding, would otherwise have preserved him. With high notions of honour, and feelings the most sensitive and acute, there was a degree of wild irregularity in his pursuits, that often injured him in the opinions of others, and produced the most poignant sensations to himself. Every beautiful woman was capable of exciting his admiration even to enthusiasm: in these sallies of the imagination, reflection was seldom exerted to check or counteract the effects they were likely to pro-

duce. He had no sooner rescued Caroline from the water, than he considered it impossible to live without her: his visit to her in the evening seemed to confirm this opinion, and, on the third day, he made Mrs. Earlvin the confidant of his passion, during the interview which caused her husband so much uneasiness. The behaviour of Osmond on his return after the accident, occasioned in Herbert a considerable degree of resentment. It was on this account he called at the Grove the following morning to inquire after Caroline's health, instead of proceeding to the residence of her guardian; and was also the motive for his consultation with Mrs. Earlvin on the probability of Osmond's acceptance of his proposals. Julia was aware of the traits in Herbert's character which urged him to be thus precipitate in the notions he had formed relative to Caroline Almond. Instead of first asking the advice of his own father, or consulting the inclinations of the young lady herself, he was making a confidant of a third person to whom

he was almost a stranger: instead of taking sufficient time to become acquainted with her disposition and character, he considered that her personal accomplishments were capable of ensuring his happiness, and that, without her, he should be the most miserable being in existence. Mrs. Earlvin was convinced there was at present but little dependence to be placed upon the stability of his passion. She was interested in the happiness of Caroline, and well knew the danger and cruelty of disappointment, where proposals are made to a young woman in the height of youthful delirium, and, afterwards, either abandoned from a consciousness of their impropriety, or coldly made good as the fulfilment of a promise. She therefore, with much dexterity, contrived, by her replies, to persuade him, for the present, to take no active steps in the plans he had so suddenly arranged; by which means, she considered, a sufficient time would elapse, either to cool the ardour of his inclinations, or to prove they were grounded upon a basis calculated to

ensure his felicity. Herbert was charmed with her reasoning, and promised to follow her advice.

Earlvin had never laboured under sensations so humiliating, as those which he experienced this evening, from a consciousness of his injustice to his wife. The idea that she was ignorant of his suspicions, seemed, if possible, to augment her injuries, and he was, at intervals, on the point of confessing them. Under a consideration, however, of preserving her from the distress he well knew such a confession would occasion, he determined to conceal the cause of those emotions he was well aware she must have observed. The following morning was the time fixed for their departure to London. Felix would now willingly have given up the journey, but there appeared no way to prevent it, without the probability of Mrs. Earlvin becoming acquainted with the motives for which it was planned.

He retired to rest on this night under a degree of serenity he had not enjoyed for several months, and with a firm determination to quell a passion, which, in moments of calm reflection, he was convinced aimed at the destruction of his happiness.

CHAPTER V.

A COUNTRY INN; A NOBLE LORD; AND A POOR POET.

EARLVIN and his family set off at an early hour the following morning, as he had resolved to sleep only one night on the road. Himself, his wife, and their two children, travelled in his post-chariot; three female servants followed in a chaise, and they had two out-riders. Felix determined to remain for the night at a large inn which stood nearly mid-way between Monmouth and London, and he gave his servants directions accordingly. It was dark an hour before the time he had calculated they would arrive there,

and, as the house stood a small distance from the road-side, the drivers passed the turning which led to it several miles before they discovered their mistake. One of the grooms at length informed his master of their situation, and requested his orders how they were to act.

"Is there any inn in the village through which we have just passed," inquired Earlvin, "capable of receiving us for the night?"

"There is a small inn, sir, within a hundred yards of where we now are," replied the servant.

"A small inn will not do," said his master; "we must return to the one where we intended to stop."

It was near nine o'clock, and Mrs. Earlvin, rather alarmed at travelling at such an hour, requested they might at least inquire for accommodation at the place the man had mentioned.

The postilions were ordered to proceed to it, and, in a few minutes, they arrived at the door. It was a decent-looking house. A post-carriage and four, with servants in splendid liveries, were drawn up on one side of the gates, apparently waiting for some of the guests. The landlord, a fair, jolly-looking man, after repeated knocking and hallooing by the grooms, attended Earlvin at the chariot-window.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," he cried, bowing with the most fawning civility, "for not attending your honour sooner; but my Lord Trelvin is here, and——"

"If Lord Trelvin is in your house, my friend," interrupted Earlvin, "it is not likely you can accommodate us; we shall want several beds, and much attendance."

"I beg your honour's pardon for one instant," replied the landlord, "but my lord is

this moment going to leave us; this chariot and four is waiting for his lordship."

"Have you three or four beds well aired?" asked Mrs. Earlvin.

"We have as good beds as any in the kingdom," returned the host; "and, as for their being aired, my lady——"

"Landlord!—master!" exclaimed several voices at once.

"My lord wants me," cried the man, and was out of sight in an instant, without finishing the sentence he had begun.

"This fellow is a fool," said Earlvin, "we shall get no accommodation here: we had better return."

Julia was still anxious to remain, when the

landlady, almost equal in size to her husband, with a voice as strong, and a beard much stronger, stood before them. She declared every thing that was comfortable was to be had in their house, and hoped their honours would get out and walk in. Felix, urged by the persuasions of his wife, consented, and they were conducted into a small, but clean, parlour. Earlvin left this room after a few minutes, to give some directions concerning his horses, when he perceived the landlord on the stair-case with a candle in each hand, ushering Lord Trelvin to his carriage. In fact, it was a kind of procession, in which the landlady and all the servants assisted. Earlvin, who had heard much of his lordship, but had never seen him, remained in the hall while he passed. He was a tall thin man, apparently about thirty, wrapped up in a light-coloured French surtout lined with dark fur. His Swiss valet followed close behind, with his lord's red-morocco port-folio and writing-case. Mr. Earlvin's horses were unharnessing at the moment his lord-

ship arrived at the door, and, observing them, he called to his valet,—

" La Pink, who have we here? Any one that is known?"

" By what I can learn from the grooms, my lord," answered the landlord, " it is a Mr. World-wind of Monmouthshire."

" World-wind!" exclaimed his lordship, " what a cursed terrific name! it is enough to stop one's breath to utter it."

" C'est horrible, my lor!" cried the valet.

The instant his lordship stepped into the carriage, the landlord suddenly gave the candles to his wife, and ran with much speed to the apartment which Lord Trelvin had just quitted, from which he returned with a long narrow slip of paper, and, presenting it at the carriage-door, said, " I beg your lordship's honour's pardon,

but I believe your lordship has forgot this little bill."

"Bill!" exclaimed his lordship; "oh! curse it, aye, I recollect. La Pink, you should have remembered the bill. It appears a most immoderate length; what is the total, La Pink?"

"Cinq guinea, my lor," answered the Swiss.

"Add another guinea for the servants," said his lordship.

"Thank you, my lord; much obliged to your lordship," vociferated various persons who surrounded the door.

"And, do you hear?" continued the noble lord, "return the bill to the landlord, and let him place it to my account. Curse the fellows! why don't they drive on?"

"Thank you, my lord," exclaimed the soli-

tary voice of the landlord, in a tone of muttering despondency; while his lordship drew up the glasses, and the chariot drove off.

Earlvin proceeded to the stables to give his orders, and soon understood, from the conversation of the servants, that Lord Trelvin had favoured this inn with his presence, because every other on the road had refused the same honour. No one ordered more profusely than his lordship, and he never forgot any thing, *but the bill.*

Mrs. Earlvin soon retired with her children to their bed-chamber, and her husband remained alone in the parlour. There was a small sash-window in this room that looked into the adjoining one, which was a large apartment, apparently for the general reception of visitors, with an opening to the bar at one end. This circumstance rendered the situation, in some respects, unpleasant, and the landlord had offered the apartment which Lord Trelvin had just quitted. As Mrs. Earlvin, however, intended to retire im-

mediately after her supper, they considered it unnecessary to remove. Earlvin had the curiosity, after his wife left him, to take a survey of the adjoining room. There were several persons in it assembled round a large fire. The night was cold, wet, and stormy. The company appeared in high good-humour, and seemed perfectly to enjoy the comforts of their situation. In the midst of their conviviality, another guest entered: he appeared a man about seventy; was dressed in black, and had a pale expressive face, with a form somewhat withered and emaciated. He seemed known to the persons round the fire, yet they made him no offer of removing to a more comfortable situation than that in which he had placed himself, at a remote part of the room. His clothes were wet; he rested his head on his hand in a melancholy posture, and took no part in the conversation of the fire-side party. There are certain countenances calculated to impress us with peculiar sensations. Earlvin gazed on the face of this man till tears almost started in his eyes. He could have embraced him as an

unfortunate, although he had no just reason to suppose him more unhappy than himself. His meditations were interrupted by the powerful voice of the landlady from the window of the bar, who called out, " Mr. what do you call 'em, in the black coat, we can't accommodate you with a bed to-night."

The guest seemed astonished at this information; he was rising from his seat to reply, when the woman stood before him—

" You see," said she, " we have our house brim-full of gentlefolks, and the devil a bed, or half a bed, have we got to spare: that which you slept in last night must be given up to the two grooms who came with the gentleman from Monmouthshire."

" I should have had more notice of these arrangements," replied the guest; " how can I procure a lodging at this time of the night?

There is not another house within some miles of this place."

"That is no bread and butter of mine," answered the landlady; "we should have no objection to your company, provided we had no better customers."

"You are insolent," returned the guest; "what little I have had I have paid for: surely I should be treated with civility."

"What you have had has been little enough, God knows," replied the landlady.

"Where is your husband?" returned the guest.—"Too busy to listen to your preaching," answered the woman; "you must budge to-night, I tell you, and that's flat."

On uttering these words, she returned to the bar, and the guest resumed his seat, apparently much agitated.

On one side of the chimney, upon a chair somewhat elevated, sat a little, fat, rosy-cheek, plump-faced man, with a pipe in his mouth, and a spaniel between his legs. His countenance was of that cast which is generally termed vacant; yet it is but justice to observe, that, in every other part of his body, it was impossible for fulness to be more strongly exemplified. He appeared stuffed even to the extremities. There was evidently much attention paid to this man by the whole company; and Earlvin soon understood from the conversation, which was not carried on in a very low tone of voice, that his name was Gulp, and that he was the churchwarden of the parish. Mr. Gulp did not talk so much as his companions, yet all appealed to him in their several arguments; and when he was urged to make a reply, he seemed to take his pipe from his mouth with reluctance, while his answers seldom extended farther than a monosyllable. The guest in black quitted the apartment, and, a few minutes afterwards, a youth of about eighteen entered it, with a lantern, a great coat, and a

walking-stick. He was Mr. Gulp's apprentice, whose daily employment concluded with the ceremony of conducting his master home. Mr. Gulp was not calculated by nature, either to dispense or receive pleasure, in what is termed convivial society; his enjoyments were concentrated into three simple divisions; eating, drinking, and sleeping. These might certainly have been procured at his own house with less expense than at the bar of an inn; but Mr. Gulp had encumbrances at home which interfered with those little comfortable extras, in which he sometimes wished to indulge. In an unfortunate and unguarded moment, during the early part of his life, he married a woman who had acquired some dangerous and inflammatory notions of female equality, and who maintained, with a flow of oratory, which, though it never convinced, sometimes overpowered her husband, that she and her children had as much right to be *comfortable* as himself. Mr. Gulp, who was a man of very few words, found these torrents of eloquence rather unpleasant; he therefore resolved, if pos-

sible, to escape them, by procuring his little enjoyments abroad, instead of at home. "For," said he to a neighbour, who was one day condoling with him on the *misfortune* of having a family, "what I say is this, that which will fill one man's belly won't be a mouthful when divided between five or six: why, then, the case is clear. I can perhaps afford, now and then, to buy enough of a good thing for one, and only one; but who is that one to be? why that one is *myself*, to be sure, says I." His neighbour declared he never heard a more powerful argument in behalf of a person's self in all his lifetime, and he had no doubt it would hold good in any court in Christendom. Mr. Gulp not only argued in behalf of himself, but he practised the doctrine he professed; for, whenever he purchased any thing good, he only provided for *one*, and that *one* was *himself*. By spending his evenings from home, he certainly avoided much noise and strife, and was enabled to recompense himself for the scanty dinner he allowed at his own table, by a warm, comfortable, and

snug supper at an inn, undisturbed by the upbraidings of his wife, or the clamour of his children.

Mr. Gulp had nearly finished his last goblet of punch, in which he had mixed three or four jellies, when his apprentice arrived, and he prepared for his departure. The lad having assisted him in putting on his coat, Mr. Gulp yawned violently, and, swallowing the remaining draught in his goblet, declared he should go home and enjoy a good night's rest in his own warm, snug, comfortable bed.

"Aye, aye, you have more than one comfortable bed in your house, Mr. Gulp," said one of the company; "it is not every body can say that, let me tell you."

"I have certainly a bed to spare for a friend," replied Mr. Gulp, rather drily.

"There is poor Mr. Seville in the passage,"

said the apprentice, " who is in want of a lodging; perhaps you could accommodate him."

" Why, how now, sir?" replied Mr. Gulp, in great anger; " who told you Mr. Seville was my friend?"

" He seems in distress," answered the apprentice.

" That's a fine reason, indeed," said Mr. Gulp, " to make me his friend. Do I ever make friends with distressed people?"

" Will you allow me to offer him part of my bed?" said the lad: " he has a long way to go to the next inn, and it rains hard."

" Rains hard!" cried Mr. Gulp, with much alarm; " here, Jack, tie this worsted-netting round my neck; button my coat close up to my chin, and tell the landlady to send me a glass of cherry-bounce. We have a quar-

ter of a mile to go in the wet, and I may catch cold."

"It is near five miles to the next inn," replied the lad.

"What's that to me?" returned Mr. Gulp. "I only wish I was safe at home: I likes to hear the wind roar, and the rain pelt, when I am warm and snug in my own bed."

"Yes, yes, Mr. Gulp," said another of his companions, "but every body may not be quite so snug at that time."

"I know nothing about any body but *myself*," answered Mr. Gulp; "if I am comfortable, that is enough for me; what can I wish for more?"

The apprentice had by this time lighted the candle in his lantern, and Mr. Gulp, leaning on the lad's shoulder with one hand, and supported

by his stick on the other, waddled out of the apartment.

Earlvin rang his bell, and desired to speak with the landlord, who was at his elbow in an instant.

" I wish to be informed," said he, " why the person in black, whom I just now observed in the next room, is to be turned out of the bed he has lately occupied, to make room for my servants ?"

The landlord, with much civility, declared his house was so full, he had no accommodation for him.

" He was your guest before we arrived," said Earlvin.

" Lord, your honour," replied the landlord, " but he is nothing of a customer ; why, he eats and drinks scarcely any thing, as I may say; and, what's worse, he calls for no more than he wants."

" Does he pay for that which he has?" asked Earlvin.

" Why yes, certainly," answered the landlord, " he pays well enough; but then his bills amount to such a trifle, your honour."

" But from that trifle," said Earlvin, " you derive a profit in equal proportion to the bill you just now placed to the account of a noble lord, who, I suppose, ordered profusely."

" Yes, certainly," replied the landlord, with a melancholy countenance, " his lordship ordered like a prince."

" But will you ever be paid for what he ordered?" asked Earlvin.

" I am afraid not," answered the landlord.

" Your conduct," replied Earlvin, " renders

you worthy only of customers similar to Lord Trelvin; the impositions under which you suffer by such men, are just punishments for your inhumanity. Does not the sign that hangs at your door invite every traveller to your house, who can purchase the entertainment he may require? Does not the profit attached to the articles for which he pays, aid to support yourself and your family? and, under these circumstances, has not the peasant and the prince an equal right to your services and civility? It is perhaps natural for you to be most attentive to the guest from whom you receive the greatest benefit; but your extra exertion to oblige one, is no excuse for your cruelty or impertinence to the other. I therefore desire that Mr. Seville (which is I believe the name of the person to whom I allude), may retain the bed he has already occupied, and that I may immediately see him to apologise for the behaviour he has received, and exculpate myself from the suspicions he may entertain of my having been the voluntary cause of it."

The landlord attempted to stammer out an excuse, but Earlvin insisted on his leaving the room. Mr. Seville, a few minutes afterwards, was announced by the waiter, and Earlvin having requested he would be seated and partake of some wine, explained the circumstances that urged him to solicit the favour of his company. Earlvin's disposition and habits were not of a description to induce him to form sudden friendships; on the contrary, he was naturally reserved, and extremely cautious even in the selection of those, whom he merely considered as his acquaintance. Yet the figure, manners, and conversation of this man, excited in him a very powerful interest. His face was manly and expressive, but, in parts, wrinkled; apparently more from profound thinking or poignancy of mental feeling, than from the ravages of age or bodily disease. The few grey hairs that were thinly scattered over his forehead, became thick and full at the back part of his head, and gave a character and dignity to his coun-

tenance. The most remarkable features, however, that he possessed, were his eyes, in which were a sparkling brilliancy, a degree of fire and intelligence, that seemed to evince a mind of the most trembling sensibility. His dress was indicative rather of respectable poverty, than moderate affluence; his clothes seemed to have served him long, and to have been managed with economy. His walk was slow and feeble, while, at intervals, he seemed to breathe with difficulty. The tears trickled down his cheeks as he grasped the hand of Earlvin with an enthusiasm bordering on phrensy. "Oh God!" he exclaimed, "is there yet a being who will address me in accents of tenderness and affection? Have I still claims on the sympathy of a fellow-creature? Excuse this rhapsody, this agony, sir," he continued: "I am unable to subdue my feelings."

"I have done nothing to demand such an excess of gratitude," replied Earlvin; "I have,

as yet, merely uttered a few words of common civility."

"Ah! but such words," answered the old man, "are felt at the heart, by one who has been accustomed only to chilling indifference, or cruel insult. The sensations they produce are various and powerful: momentary exultation, in suddenly possessing an unexpected enjoyment, is blended with poignant suffering from the remembrance of past happiness. Alas! sir, I am a forlorn and melancholy wanderer; old, enfeebled, and emaciated; with a mind capable of appreciating the value of the blessings I have so long lost, and a memory which unfortunately enables me to compare them with my present condition."

Earlvin requested him to be composed; to have urged a disclosure of his situation, would have been equally cruel and indelicate; but, having in some degree recovered himself, he

voluntarily related the principal events of his past life, to which Felix listened with the utmost anxiety and attention.

He was the only child of parents, who, by honest industry, had been enabled to give up the fatigues of business at an age, when infirmities were not for some years likely to imbitter their enjoyments. They acquired a small independence from a retail trade, and retired with their son (then about eight years old), to their native village in the county of Hampshire. The property they possessed was sufficient to procure them every comfort; their desires were limited, and they had neither ambition nor inclination for those luxuries which are only to be purchased by wasteful extravagance. Their beloved child was the object of their tenderest care and solicitude; yet the plans they adopted for his future prospects, were not, perhaps, quite so prudent as many they had formed with less care and anxiety. Eustace was placed at a grammar-school near the residence of his parents, and

the talents he evinced during the progress of his studies at this seminary, were of a very superior kind. It was the discovery of such talents, from the favourable report of the tutor, that materially altered the discreet arrangements which his parents had already commenced. A respectable tradesman in the county where they had formerly resided, was in want of an apprentice, and had lately agreed to the proposals they had made for receiving their son in that capacity. The business was genteel and profitable, and the boy himself was desirous of the situation. During the evening, however, before the day on which his father was to return a final answer to the tradesman, the schoolmaster paid one of his quarterly visits at Seville's cottage, and, while he received the amount of his last bill, expatiated with more than usual earnestness on the great abilities of his pupil. In the course of the conversation, he was given to understand, that, at the conclusion of the next quarter, Eustace was to be withdrawn from his school, for the purpose of commencing his apprenticeship to the person they had

provided for him. The tutor, either from motives of interest, or sentiments of regard for the lad, seemed chagrined and distressed at the information, while he hinted at the cruelty of sacrificing such talents to the study of a business in which the most ordinary mind would be made perfect in a few years, and from which he would have little chance of acquiring either fortune or celebrity. These observations, although they produced no reply at the moment, occupied the minds of his parents during the night, and, by the morning, they were perfectly agreed in opinion, that the remarks of the tutor were equally just and correct. A letter was immediately forwarded to the tradesman, civilly refusing the situation for their son, which a few weeks before they had earnestly solicited, and the schoolmaster was informed, that his pupil should remain under his care another twelvemonth. This man, who was a good scholar, and extremely partial to Eustace, considered himself bound in honour, to use every exertion for his improvement during the additional time allowed for his studies. The

boy himself became even more attentive and assiduous than before; his emulation was excited by the high expectations he conceived his parents must have formed upon his success, and his anxiety to fulfil those expectations, was a powerful stimulus to his industry. In short, at the expiration of two years, the master, with a candour as commendable as it was extraordinary, declared his pupil had acquired as much learning as he was capable of teaching. The satisfaction which this information occasioned old Seville and his wife, urged them to farther expenses, in order to complete the education of their son for one of the learned professions, in which they considered his fortune and reputation would be secured. He was placed at Eton for two years, and from thence removed to Oxford, where he was supported with a liberality that enabled him to associate with students of the first rank in the university. Eustace, during the progress of his studies, acquired a taste for learning and literature, which formed the sources of his principal enjoyments. The encouragement given to

such pursuits within the precincts of a university, rendered them still more dear and delightful to him; the enthusiasm natural to a youthful mind, was fostered and elevated by the perusal of those works that formed a part of his daily employment: every hour produced new models for his admiration, which increased his knowledge, and augmented his happiness. He had no leisure for dissipated and extravagant company; the annual allowance he received from his father, was always sufficient to answer his expenses; while his economy enabled him to avoid meanness, and to maintain his dignity with those who, although they had more to spend, had generally less to spare.

The sacrifices which old Seville made to support the expenses of his son's residence at the university, were carefully concealed from the young man himself. The great increase of value in all the necessaries of life, had reduced the income with which he quitted business, from moderate affluence to a confined stipend. After

some time, he was obliged to encroach upon the principal of his fortune, to keep up the payments, which he had hitherto defrayed from the interest. Still he anticipated, with the fervour of parental affection, a period when he would be repaid for all his expenses and anxiety, by beholding his son in possession of those honours and riches he was perfectly convinced he must acquire. The time at length arrived, which proved the fallaciousness of these hopes. In a conversation between the father and son during one of the college vacations, the former was necessitated to mention the gradual reduction of his fortune by his late encroachments on the capital, while the latter, equally astonished and grieved at the information, was suddenly roused from dreams of tranquil enjoyment, to animated exertions for independence. He determined no longer to be a burden to those, who, in aiding his happiness, had already deprived themselves of many comforts, which their increasing age and infirmities rendered daily more necessary. It was the various disappointments, false promises, and cold

indifference, which these efforts produced, that chilled the warm enthusiasm of youthful hope in the bosom of Eustace, and cast a gloom over the prospects of his parents. His first application was through a letter of introduction from one of the seniors of his college, to a man of high rank and power, who held a situation of great trust and consequence under the government, and who was supposed to have considerable interest with the leading members of administration. Eustace was advised to call upon this gentleman in London, and, after a regular attendance in his waiting-room during a certain part of the day for three weeks, he was one morning suddenly conducted to his presence, through the error of a new footman, who mistook him for a popular musician that was engaged to superintend a musical entertainment his master was to give the following evening. Young Seville was astonished and confused at the questions which were put to him relative to the selections and performers for the concert; and the amateur, equally chagrined and angry that the

claims of humble merit should interfere with the arrangements for his pleasures, dismissed the student with evident marks of disapprobation and contempt, while he squeezed the hand of the Italian professor, who was announced at the same instant, and apologised for the few moments he had been detained through an unfortunate and cruel mistake. Abashed and irritated, Eustace returned to the country; but feelings of filial affection, and a consciousness of the propriety of his exertions, urged him to renew them with additional ardour and industry. By some he was received with fawning civility, by others, with insulting contempt. The former flattered, promised, and deceived him; while the latter wounded his feelings, and excited his disgust. The expenses which he incurred by his residence in London, and the humiliating and distressing situations in which he was continually involved, at length urged him to give up his pursuits, and return to the country, where he might resolve upon other expedients more suitable to his inclinations, and less derogating to his feelings. During his residence at

college, he had occasionally amused himself by composing a few short poems on various subjects; he was advised to collect and offer them for publication. He again returned to town elevated with new hopes, and sanguine in his expectations of success; but his mortification and disappointment were extreme, when the bookseller, to whom he presented his little manuscript, declared that it was by no means marketable; that they were already overstocked with such kind of poetry, which was never called for, but remained on their hands a dead and unsaleable commodity.

Eustace, like most other authors, had sufficient confidence in his own works, to render him doubtful of those opinions which questioned their merits: after some consideration, he determined on an appeal to the public, by printing them at his own expense. This speculation procured him a small sum of money, and, although the sale was not so rapid as he expected, yet it encouraged him to make a second attempt, in which he

was more successful. He now formed the resolution of adopting the profession of an author, which seemed the only one open for his exertions; his taste and acquirements rendered the application it imposed neither irksome nor unpleasant, while the profits likely to result from it, promised a comfortable independence. Having made up his mind on a subject that for many months had occasioned him considerable uneasiness, he soon attained his usual serenity and cheerfulness. He fixed his abode at the cottage of his parents, in which a small apartment was given up for his convenience. His walks, his books, his social meals with those whom he loved, even the employment by which he procured his subsistence, were, in their turns, pleasures of the most exquisite kind, and, by the succession in which they were enjoyed, became more desirable from change and variety. Thus passed those few years in the life of Eustace Seville, that are considered as the prime of manhood. There were still some peculiar traits in his character, which, however trivial and minute

they might appear during this period of his existence, were ultimately the causes of very powerful effects. The continual resources which he found within himself for amusement and pleasure, the domestic comforts that were always opened to him at intervals when they were required, left him nothing to wish for or expect from the ties of friendship or connexion, which are generally formed in social and busy life. He possessed too much pride to court or seek the society of those whose talents and pursuits were similar to his own; while the company and conversation of his humble neighbours failed either to interest or entertain him. His works were read and admired, but the obscurity of the author was a sufficient excuse for neglecting him. Men are ashamed of being pleased with they know not whom. There were, however, certain terms on which he might have been admitted to the tables of persons, whose patronage would have procured him more distinction than any merits he possessed; but, in this case, he must have forfeited the independence of his charac-

ter, by a degrading acquiescence to every whim and caprice of his host, however opposite to his opinions, or revolting to his principles. These sentiments were nourished by the enthusiasm natural to his character. His studies, his mode of living, and the romantic scenery which surrounded him, all tended to produce those peculiar modes of thinking that characterise the inspirations of poetic genius. The sublime objects of nature, that create neither interest nor delight in an uncultivated mind, excite awful and trembling admiration in one, who reflects on the power by which they are produced. Far removed from scenes of gaiety and dissipation, that often delude the mind and corrupt the heart, Eustace escaped temptations which are always dangerous to a warm and youthful imagination. But, from this seclusion, his feelings became more sensitive and tremulous to certain impressions connected with his situation; his affections and his pleasures were concentrated in a few objects, which rendered their possession more dear and valu-

able. His life had hitherto been a calm scene of uninterrupted happiness; he had experienced neither sorrow nor anxiety; by avoiding the errors of juvenile life, he had escaped the punishment of juvenile indiscretions; and, by having acquired a taste for the employments in which he was engaged, his daily occupations became sources of delight and gratification. Under such circumstances, he was less prepared to sustain a deprivation of felicity, than one inured to disappointment and misfortune. Those philosophical arguments which prove the virtue and advantage of fortitude under suffering, were no doubt well known by him; yet, neither the conviction of their truth, nor the consciousness of their worth, were capable of alleviating his distress in the hour of calamity. His parents died suddenly within a week of each other, and he at once found himself forlorn, deserted, and alone. During the first few days of his affliction, his mental faculties seemed benumbed by the agonising sensations that overwhelmed him. He sat in his usual place, and gazed on the seats which had

so recently been occupied by his beloved companions; at intervals he fancied he heard the tones of their voice, and while his bursting eyes were fixed on vacancy, their forms were presented to his bewildered imagination embodied in all the vivid colouring of reality. In his feverish dreams he again beheld them; conceived himself surrounded by his former comforts, and awoke only to feel, with increased poignancy, a consciousness of the delusion. During the interval between the death and burial of his parents, his solitude received no relief from visits of friendly condolence: he was not on terms of sufficient intimacy with a single being, to produce those soothing sounds of sympathy and consolation, which can only be administered by those who love us. He was known and respected among his neighbours; his civility had called forth their esteem, his abilities their admiration; but neither esteem nor admiration are capable of producing that tender regard, that acute sensibility, which is only to be derived from ties of kindred affection, or close-cemented friendship.

He attended the funeral with an apparent degree of composure that astonished the surrounding persons. He shed no tears, nor uttered any groans; he returned to his cottage, sat down to his supper alone, and attempted to partake of it. He listened for the usual voice which invited him to eat, but all was gloomy and comfortless. A cold convulsive trembling seized his limbs; he seemed deprived of utterance, while his hysteric sobs alarmed the servant, who found him extended insensible on the floor. He was put to bed, and medical advice immediately procured; but, by the directions of the village-apothecary who attended, he was neither disturbed to receive medicine, nor answer unnecessary inquiries. Several of the neighbours who witnessed this mode of treatment, made up their minds as to the apothecary's ignorance of the case. A man of great practice, from a large town about twelve miles distant, was called in; he felt his pulse, asked a few questions, shook his head, and received his fee. The wretched sufferer lay extended on his bed, feeble, ener-

vated, and scarcely sensible of his existence, but at those moments when he was assailed by the unfeeling voices of his attendants. A distant relative, whom he had never seen since his childhood, was sent for from London. The character of this man was of a description, that had prevented the parents of Eustace from maintaining any intimacy or connexion with him. He immediately assumed the direction of the concerns, and encouraged the alarm of the attendants, respecting the insanity of their patient. He proposed a strait-waistcoat, engaged a keeper from a private mad-house, and, at length, succeeded in dragging him from his home, and placing him in one of those wretched receptacles for lunatics, where the malady of the unfortunate victims is increased by the barbarous treatment of their ferocious and cruel jailors. Here, in a small gloomy room, barricaded with the strength of a prison, and deprived of every comfort and convenience, was confined the once happy Seville. Agony and despair produced those ravings of delirium, which seemed to form some

excuse for the severity of his treatment. The necessary expenses attending his imprisonment, were defrayed by the wretch who had occasioned it, while he appropriated the surplus of the little fortune he had seized to his own use and pleasures. A very few years were sufficient for him to dissipate this property; his circumstances became embarrassed, and, with a view of retrieving them, he committed crimes that obliged him to abandon his country for ever. Seville's liberty was the consequence of these events; the proprietor of the house in which he was placed, conceiving there was no probability of receiving any farther emolument from his confinement, declared he was *perfectly recovered*, and threw him again on the world. He had been a prisoner ten years; the energies of his mind were almost destroyed by mental suffering, and his body was weakened and debilitated for want of the comforts he had formerly enjoyed. Not a single inquiry had been made after him. There was not a being on earth sufficiently in-

terested in his fate, either to be anxious for his happiness or even to care for his existence. He had been deprived of books and society, and allowed but little exercise. Even the use of pen and ink had been cruelly denied him, while he had cautiously concealed a pencil which was in his possession when brought to the house, and watched its gradual decrease with agonising regret. With this, he would sometimes amuse himself for short intervals, by expressing his thoughts on a few blank leaves of his pocket-book; but his mind was seldom in a state to admit of such relief, and never sufficiently composed to continue it for any considerable length of time. He passed many hours of the night in stedfastly gazing on the pale rays from his lamp, while his brain was busily employed in reflections on past scenes, that augmented his sufferings, and increased his despair. On his release, a few guineas were presented to him, as the charitable subscription of the servants who belonged to the house in which he had been confined,

added to the donations of some persons in the neighbourhood, whose sympathy had been excited by a relation of the circumstances under which he was discharged. With this sum he took leave of his prison at an early hour one morning in the month of August. The sensations he experienced when he once more breathed the fresh air, in the possession of that liberty he so dearly loved, and had so long lost, were such as for some time to bewilder his ideas, and render him almost insensible of his actions. He climbed an eminence but a short distance from the place he had quitted, and, prostrate on the earth, gazed with a phrensied eye on the rising sun. His figure accorded with the scenery that surrounded him. It was an extended heath, broken and unequal; in parts, covered with thick brushwood, and gradually rising on one side to a considerable height, while, on the other, it formed a rugged and almost perpendicular declivity to an adjoining valley. Here, a few scattered cottages, with small plats of cultivated land that reached

almost to the foot of the precipice, were encircled by neat fences, and sheltered by the awful brow of the mountain, which hung with frowning grandeur over their lowly roofs. At a considerable distance, the various tints of ripening corn, were contrasted with the verdure of the meadow-land, and intersected by small villages, scarcely perceptible but from the shadowed spaces on which they stood, or by the elevation of an humble spire. The sun, as it majestically rose above the line of the horizon, suddenly enlivened the creation with his warm and cheering beams; all nature seemed animated and rejoiced; every object partook of his splendour, from the arched firmament of heaven, to the spangled dew-drop on the morning flower. Seville had approached near the edge of the precipice; the sensations he experienced from the scene that surrounded him were various and acute. Exultation, delight, and rapture, in once more being able to gaze on the open face of nature, were mingled with the enthusiasm, which a sight of such ob-

jects had formerly inspired, while his joy was moderated by feelings of pensive melancholy, from the recollection of happiness formerly enjoyed.

His feelings were too powerful for his strength; his ideas became dark and confused. His eyes were still fixed on the sun, but he saw it not, while his head sunk on the earth. At this moment, the warbling of a wild thrush that was perched on the tangled branches of a black-thorn, suddenly struck upon his ear. The notes were familiar to him; he had once possessed a favourite bird of this species, that was usually placed on the outside of his chamber-window, and whose song was the signal for his rising. The various associations which this impression produced in his mind, were of a nature to excite the most tender and lively emotions: he listened with breathless attention, while his thoughts were employed on past scenes connected with the sounds that had brought them to his imagination.

The tears, which at this moment trickled down his faded cheeks, were the first he had shed for many months; he wept even with violence. The notes of the single bird were now joined by many others; the chorus was full and animating: the sun shone powerfully on the part where he rested, and its beams were reflected with dazzling lustre from the cottage casements in the valley. The few sheep and cattle which grazed in the adjoining meadows were in motion, and a part of the inhabitants had already quitted their homes, and were proceeding to their daily labour. From this period, his mind became more composed, and he began to arrange his thoughts with some degree of precision. It was requisite he should adopt plans for the future; and, during the remainder of the day, he was engaged in their consideration. The following morning, he took the road which led to his paternal cottage, and arrived there at a late hour in the evening. The little parlour in the front part of the building was illumined by a cheerful fire. Seville rested against a stone on the opposite side of the road, and

gazed with pensive earnestness on his once happy home. He experienced the most powerful emotions; tears gushed from his eyes, yet he struggled to command his feelings. He determined to make some inquiries of those who inhabited it, but he trembled violently as he approached the door, while his hand was scarcely capable of lifting up the well-known latch. He was invited by a little girl, about six years old, to walk in; her father rented the dwelling, and Seville recollected him as a neighbour, who had formerly occupied the adjoining house. This man, although never admitted on terms of intimacy with the family, had been indebted to them for some friendly offices, in which young Seville had taken an active part. It was many minutes before he recognised his visitor; his obligations to him, however, were not forgotten; he seated him by the fire, called upon his wife to prepare him refreshment, and insisted on his sleeping in the room he had formerly occupied. Seville would fain have declined his hospitality; every object

that he beheld, so forcibly reminded him of the past, that he became incapable of those reflections which he had before summoned to his aid. After a little time, however, he sufficiently recovered to ask several questions of his host, and to listen to his answers with tolerable composure. From this man he understood, that the writings which contained the title to the cottage, had never been in the possession of his perfidious relative, who had therefore been unable to dispose of it in any other way than as a tenancy at will, and on such terms the present occupier rented it. Seville recollected the place where the writings, with several other papers, had been preserved. They were deposited in a small iron chest, and placed within a closet formed by a recess in one of the chambers, which was concealed from observation by the door exactly corresponding with the wainscoting of the room. He immediately proceeded to the spot, attended by his host, and, in a few minutes, possessed the deeds that secured to him this part of the little property be-

queathed to him by his father. He was advised, the following day, to consult with an attorney who lived in the village; with his assistance, after a tedious process in law, he recovered a small sum of money, which he sunk in an annuity for his life. The annuity, added to the rental of his cottage, produced him an annual income of about a hundred pounds. For some years, he occasionally added a trifle to this stipend, by the casual productions of his pen; such profits, however, were very uncertain, and very small; mental suffering, and long confinement, had produced a nervous affection and debility which materially reduced the powers of his mind. Having failed in early life, to form those connexions and friendships which are often the only sources of enjoyment during the declining part of it, he flattered himself, that continual change of scene and objects would relieve the oppression he still felt at his heart. His hopes were vain and illusive; it is true, he possessed genius and feelings that excited curiosity, and rendered novel-

ty gratifying; but he wanted the comforts of a home; he languished for that calm domestic serenity which is only to be derived in the bosom of a beloved family, or from a social intercourse with the friends of our youth. Seville had passed the period in existence when such attachments are commenced with warmth, and matured with success; neither his taste nor habits had inclined him to cultivate them, and now arrived at years when they are most required and best enjoyed, he found himself alone, detached and separated from ties that are a blessing to individuals, and an honour to the creation. He had long since been incapable of literary pursuits; the little addition they had formerly produced to his small income had been expended on the extras which are required in ill health, while his annuity was insufficient to procure him comforts that became daily more necessary for his increasing age and infirmities.

Earlvin was much affected by the poor poet's

relation of the above events; it appealed powerfully to his feelings, and excited a degree of interest for the narrator he had seldom experienced. He would gladly have made him a pecuniary present, but was fearful of offending or distressing him. At length he obtained the old man's promise to visit him in London, and, for this purpose, he gave him his address at the hotel where he usually resided when in town. These arrangements being made, Seville took his leave, and Earlvin retired to his chamber. He was for some time deprived of sleep by the reflections this interview occasioned. In considering the forlorn and destitute situation of poor Seville, he instantly became impressed with a consciousness of the many blessings he himself possessed. He was in the prime of youth, enjoyed good health, had an affluent fortune, and a beloved family. What more was requisite to constitute his felicity? Yet he nourished within his bosom a fatal passion which gradually undermined his happiness, and reduced him to

a level with the most miserable. These considerations called forth his gratitude for the past, and produced many resolutions for the future.

CHAPTER VI.

A FASHIONABLE ROUT; WITH SLIGHT SKETCHES OF A FEW OF THE GUESTS.

Earlvin and his family arrived in London on the evening of the following day. Mr. Osmond received them at the hotel which had been appointed for their meeting, and welcomed them with a satisfaction and good-humour very different from his general mode of behaviour. He had already provided a house for their reception, and gave them an invitation to his own. He appeared in unusual spirits, talked of his ward with much tenderness, and observed, that he should probably remain in London some time, in order that she might partake of its amusements. He mentioned several old acquaintances whom he had discovered, but more par-

ticularly a new one who had lately arrived from the West Indies, with strong recommendations to his friendship. Osmond's account of the qualifications of this gentleman, indicated a strong prepossession in his favour, and both Earlvin and his wife formed some conjectures on the probability of an alliance taking place between the young stranger and his ward. He promised to breakfast with them the following morning, and conduct them to their new dwelling; but politely refused Mrs. Earlvin's request, that Caroline might accompany him.

Felix and his wife were extremely well pleased with the residence he had provided, and removed to it immediately. Osmond engaged them for the evening to an entertainment he intended to give at his own house, for the purpose of introducing his ward and his young friend (the West Indian) to some of his London acquaintance.

Although they had anticipated a change in his style of living, from his conversation since his

arrival in town, yet they were much surprised at the elegance of the house and number of domestics he had engaged; and were still more astonished, when, instead of a select party which they had expected to meet, they were conducted into a suite of drawing-rooms, splendidly illuminated, and crowded with company.

Mr. Osmond received them with great civility, and immediately led them to one of the apartments in which Caroline Almond was seated between two gentlemen, one of whom he introduced as the West Indian.

Caroline welcomed Mrs. Earlvin with a joy which suddenly animated her countenance with expressions of delight and satisfaction. Each of the gentlemen who were next to her offered their seats; Mrs. Earlvin accepted that on her left hand, and the West Indian immediately resumed his place. The person of this young man was tall and commanding; his complexion, though very dark, was tinged with a fine florid colour,

and his eyes possessed a brilliancy which rendered his face extremely interesting. As there were no seats vacant near the part where they stood, Osmond and Earlvin sauntered to another room, and, after some little time, were separated by the increasing number of visitors which continued to be announced. The latter amused himself for some time with observing the various groups that surrounded him, while he reflected on the absurdity of a fashion, by which the generous comforts of old English hospitality are sacrificed for the insipidity of a modern rout; where the visitors and the visited are equally strangers to each other, and where effeminate manners and vicious habits are veiled under the specious epithets of good breeding and genteel society. Neither years nor circumstances seemed capable of limiting the guests. Women, whom age should have rendered prudent, and whose daughters required examples of modesty, were most notorious for their levity, and least delicate in their conduct. Girls of sixteen, and their grandmothers of sixty, were rouged with the same tints,

and made up with the same ornaments: on one, they destroyed the bloom of youthful beauty, and disfigured what nature had intended to be lovely; in the other, they patched up the wrinkles of age and dissipation, and rendered disgusting, what time and virtue would have made respectable. Earlvin was interrupted in his reverie on this subject by a conversation which suddenly seized his attention.

"She is a cursed fine woman!" exclaimed a tall lean figure in a dressed suit of silk and silver; "may I perish, if she is not the most delectable creature in the room!"

"Your grace must certainly have seen her before," answered a dapper little gentleman, who was necessitated to walk on tip-toe that he might have the honour of touching his grace's arm; "she was a daughter of Roseville's, whom we all knew."

"Indeed!" lisped the noble guest; "and

how the devil happens it she has been so long in shade?"

"She is married," exclaimed the little man; "and that accounts for it.—He! he! he!"

"But what accounts for her again breaking forth in such lustre?" asked his grace.

"Her husband has trusted her from his elbow," answered the facetious gentleman; "therefore, she has escaped from the shadow which eclipsed her.—He! he! he!"

However contemptible the parties who were engaged in this tête-à-tête might appear to Earlvin, yet it in some degree disconcerted him, and he involuntarily returned to the apartment in which he had left his wife. She was still in the same place, but completely encircled by a party of gentlemen, who were evidently collected there for an opportunity of conversing either with her or her friend. In the midst of them was the

nobleman whom Earlvin met at the inn on the first night of their journey; he was leaning on the back of Mrs. Earlvin's chair, and gazing on those who surrounded him with a most unmeaning stare of stupidity. The West Indian had changed his seat, and was now stationed between Caroline and Mrs. Earlvin. He appeared full of vivacity, and engrossed the attention of the whole party. Felix was restless and unhappy; he moved from one part to another, but was unable to break the phalanx which opposed him. He watched every change of his wife's countenance, yet could trace in it nothing but satisfaction and good-humour.

"It is such scenes as these," whispered Earlvin to himself with fretful petulance, "that often destroy domestic comforts, and undermine the happiness of years. It is thus the wary seducer is allowed the opportunity of practising his insidious arts, and becomes privileged by fashionable freedom to talk and act in a manner, which, if

once tolerated by a female auditor, is a sufficient encouragement to every other liberty."

He threw himself on the nearest chair, with his eyes sullenly fixed on the group that occasioned his vexation. He had remained but a few minutes in this situation, when he was suddenly accosted by a remarkable prim little man in black, who had just taken a place at a whist-table close to his elbow, and who, while the two lean females, with whom he was going to engage, were employed in settling the terms of their play, took the opportunity of addressing himself to Earlvin.

"The rooms are uncommonly warm, sir," said he, while he drew up his long pale face into a grin of simpering civility, and folded his hands over each other in a manner that generally indicates a great degree of comfort and satisfaction. "Excuse my freedom, sir, but I presume I have the honour to address Mr. Earlvin of Monmouthshire."

Earlvin bowed, but was silent.

" Exactly so; perfectly correct, I perceive: I had once the happiness, sir, to be introduced to you, at a meeting of the freeholders of that county."

" I beg your pardon," replied Felix; " I really did not, at the moment, recollect."

" Not at all to be wondered at, sir," continued the little man; " all bustle and confusion at that time: I was almost squeezed to a mummy myself before it was over. Excuse my freedom, will you join us at this table?—The two Miss Shanks and myself."

" Sir," replied Earlvin, " I am much obliged by your offer, but it is not my intention to play this evening."

" Here is papa; he will join us, I am sure," squeaked one of the females to a fat squabby

figure who was approaching the table panting for breath, and evidently heated much above his usual temperature.

"I will join nobody till I am cooler," he muttered; "these rooms swelter me to death. A man might as well exist in an oven."

"Lord, sir," cried the other lady, "what a horrid idea! Come, Mr. Parrot, we positively must cut in papa."

An altercation now ensued between the father and daughters respecting his being cut in or left out, in which Mr. Parrot did not seem much inclined to take a part, but, leaning over the back of his chair, continued his conversation with Earlvin. He appeared to be acquainted with most of the company present, and his descriptions were amusing.

"You observe, sir," said he, "that elderly man with a dark scratch-wig and light-coloured

coat; he was married about six months ago to the young creature who sits next to him. She was a blooming farmer's daughter in Yorkshire, and he a rich gouty banker of London. They met at a ball during the time of the assizes, when the young lady, in tripping down one of the dances, stumbled over the old gentleman's diseased toes, and appeared so lovely during her confusion and apology, that the banker, on the next morning, discovered his heart was wounded instead of his feet: he made a tender of his affections before night, and married the lady in less than a month."

"It was a fortunate *slip*, I presume, sir, for the young lady," observed Earlvin, drily.

"Excuse me, sir," answered Mr. Parrot; "not exactly so, I believe: by habits and education she was calculated to make a good wife for an industrious tradesman; but, when ambition urged her to sacrifice her youth to age and infirmity, her character underwent a complete re-

volution. The affluence she so suddenly possessed was dearly purchased, and her anxiety to make the most of its enjoyments, has plunged her into scenes of gaiety and dissipation, which will probably destroy her health, and corrupt her heart."

"This man," thought Earlvin, "is not the superficial coxcomb I supposed him."

"Like most persons, sir," continued the orator, "under similar circumstances, the lady's expences and pleasures are always in the extreme; it is her pride to dress finer, play deeper, and visit more, than those who claim an hereditary right to such luxuries. The fortune which her husband, in part, acquired from the drudgery of his first wife, is wasted in prodigal profusion by his second; the prime part of his existence has been consumed in laborious exertions and penurious privations; and now, instead of the repose and comforts so requisite for his age and infirmities, he is harassed with tormenting suspi-

cions of his wife's fidelity, and follows her through every scene of gaiety and folly, to watch her conduct, and, if possible, preserve his own honour."

"Woeful examples," exclaimed Earlvin, "of foolish levity in an old man, and vicious ambition in a young woman!"

"Exactly so, perfectly correct," said Mr. Parrot; "excuse my freedom; but on the opposite side, is a group still more worthy of attention. Do you perceive those three ladies dressed exactly alike, who are talking to the lusty good-looking clergyman at the farther card-table?"

"Sir," answered Earlvin, "I perceive the three young ladies you mention, but I see no clergyman."

"Ha! ha! That's very well, upon my honour," replied the little man, "but not exactly correct; the backs of those ladies are certainly precisely the same; every fold in their drapery

is as similar as possible; but were you to see their faces, you would discover a very material difference. Two of them are certainly young, but the third is their mother. The person with whom they are conversing might doubtless be taken for any thing but a parson, yet he possesses an excellent living; and if there is nothing clerical in his own appearance and conduct, he has appointed a curate who is unexceptionable in both. The old lady, sir, is a woman of quality, who was neither handsome by nature nor rich by inheritance; yet she firmly resolved never to disgrace her ancestry by a plebeian connexion, and therefore married an earl without a rent-roll. If her husband had not the fortune of a peer, he certainly possessed principles which many peers want. He contrived to support his family on a small income without injuring his trades-people, and denied himself many of the external ornaments of his rank, that he might maintain the more essential parts of it. His death, unfortunately, placed his daughters entirely under the management and controul of their mother, a woman with strong pride and a weak understand-

ing. In the education of her three girls, she has pursued a system of speculation too often adopted in various degrees of life; she expended the little property which the care and frugality of her husband enabled him to leave for their support, in absurd and superficial accomplishments, that have not only deprived them of more useful knowledge, but produced a taste for extravagance they have not the means to support, and a disgust for those duties and pursuits which are alone calculated to render their poverty respectable."

"You mentioned three daughters," said Earlvin, "I perceive but two."

"Exactly so," cried the orator; "the third, my good sir, has proved a fatal example of the erroneous system under which she was educated. Cultivated only in those ornamental parts of female learning which she had neither fortune to support nor opportunity to display; destitute of every acquirement which would have rendered her a desirable wife for a respectable tradesman,

or a private gentleman; lovely in her person, but bold and assuming in her manners; deprived of those luxuries at home which she should never have partaken of abroad, galled with a consciousness of poverty, yet too indolent and proud to become independent by her own industry, it is not surprising that she should fall a prey to the licentious. A certain nobleman of large property, high rank, and dissipated character, under the mask of serious addresses, aided by the folly and imprudence of her mother, seduced her from her home, and, after a few months, abandoned her with a small annuity, which was not sufficient to discharge the debts she had contracted. Her necessities, and her disgrace, urged her to a farther progress in vice, and she has now degenerated to the mistress of a celebrated gambler, who places her at his table as a bait for his visitors, and allows her to dispense her favours among his guests, while he shares in the profits which are derived from them."

"Methinks," said Earlvin, "that the cler-

gyman with whom they are so closely engaged in conversation, and who appears on friendly terms with them, might have had sufficient influence with the mother to have made her sensible of her errors, or have been enabled, by his advice, to have preserved her children from their dreadful effects."

"Excuse my freedom," answered Mr. Parrot, "but that observation is not exactly correct. I have not yet made you acquainted with the character of that clergyman. He is chaplain to the very nobleman who seduced the eldest daughter; he acted as his patron's agent in the business relative to the separation and annuity."—"Sir!" interrupted Earlvin, with a warmth which flushed his cheeks and astonished the orator, "both my habits and education have tended to excite in me strong interest for a body of men, whose sacred profession, and awful responsibility, should preserve them from detraction, and secure them even from malicious insinuations."

" That may be very true, sir," returned Mr. Parrot, who seemed somewhat discomposed and offended at the rebuke, " but you must allow me to observe, that no *profession* or *situation*, however high or respectable, should screen a vicious individual from just and merited censure."

It is probable Mr. Parrot would not have uttered this sentence, had not the warmth of his temper, in some degree, overcome his prudence; he was now obliged to continue the conversation, that he might bear out the assertions he had so incautiously made. Fortunately the two ladies, with whom he had been going to engage at the card-table, offended at his neglect, had suddenly withdrawn with their fat papa to another part of the room. Mr. Parrot, therefore, moved his chair still nearer to Earlvin, and proceeded with his description in an under-tone of voice.

" You must know, sir," he continued, " that clergyman was a fellow-collegian with the noble-

man whom I have just mentioned. Placed at the university by parents who were unable to support the expences of such an arrangement; gay, dissipated, and extravagant, he soon discovered, that either his pleasures must be forfeited, or other resources procured to maintain them. He hesitated on this point but a short time; he was incapable of subduing his propensities, but he had sufficient art and ability to gratify them in private. He contrived to associate with the depraved, to dupe the unwary, and follow his own inclinations, without being expelled from his college, or marked as the worst character which belonged to it. Similarity of tastes and pursuits cemented a close intimacy between him and a young nobleman, whose guardians (in conformity to the will which nominated them) had placed him at the different seminaries it specified, without troubling themselves as to the improvements he made in his education, or the connexions he formed during the progress of it. In their arrangements for his travels, which concluded their trust, they very readily acquiesced to his choosing

for himself a tutor and companion. They were too indolent to make any inquiries as to the character of the person he had selected, and were too polite to have objected to him, even if they had known his demerits. To give, however, a stamp of gravity and decorum to his name, and enable him to come to some settlement with his creditors, he was presented by his patron with a living worth several hundreds per annum, a seventh part of which was allowed to a worthy curate with a large family, for performing the whole of the duty, and the remainder appropriated for the payment of those persons, who had taken the liberty to detain the tutor even at the moment he was leaving England. They remained abroad three years, and were partakers in every luxury and vice which were offered by the places they visited. The tutor provided pleasures, and the pupil paid for them. Their interests were reciprocal; one had taste and invention, the other money. On their return to England, however, some few alterations in their proceedings were considered necessary, and mutually approved and agreed to

by both parties. The high rank of the noble lord, and the dependent situation of his tutor, rendered a public display of the intimacy and close friendship they had formerly maintained impossible. But there were many points in which they were capable of being useful to each other: the noble lord had great patronage to bestow, and the tutor many opportunities to oblige. There are various concerns in which a great man wants a little friend; his lordship detests forms, explanations, and settlements; and the doctor has taken all such business into his own hands; he has considerable employment, but his profits are equal to his exertions. It is from these resources, added to the emoluments of his rectorship, that he is enabled to live in elegance and splendour, while his poor curate, who possesses all the virtue and piety that should distinguish a parish-priest, whose duties are performed with zeal and activity, and who illustrates by his actions, what he recommends in his pulpit, is obliged to support a wife and six children on a sum, which is inadequate to procure them the necessaries of ex-

istence. To screen such persons," continued Mr. Parrot, "from public notice, or stifle those feelings of disgust which their actions must excite, is, in my humble opinion, neither serviceable to the profession they disgrace, nor calculated to maintain the dignity of an order they so unwarrantably assume."

Earlvin was on the point of replying to this observation, when Mr. Osmond interrupted him, by raillery on his absence from the ladies; and the orator immediately disappeared.

"I have been somewhat entertained," said Felix, "by the person who has just quitted me: he possesses great volubility, and has given me descriptions of some of your guests, which, although I cannot vouch for their being correct portraits, may certainly be allowed to pass as general resemblances."

"And as artists," answered Osmond, "are seldom happy or faithful in taking their own like-

ness, I will, in a few words, give you a sketch of Mr. Parrot. He was born in a distant county of England; his parents were poor, honest, and industrious: they laboured hard, and deprived themselves of many necessary comforts, to bestow on their son the first rudiments of a plain education. An attorney in the neighbourhood of the village where they resided, offered to take him in his office; a proposal joyfully received by the parents, and gladly accepted by the lad himself. His employer soon discovered that his parts were brilliant, yet not solid; that his apprehension was quick, lively, and penetrating, but that he had little industry or inclination to improve his talents by study or reflection. He was neither dissipated nor vicious, but his time was frittered away in flying from one pursuit to another, and, though never idle, he was seldom well employed. He had sensitive feelings, but their effects were transient. A tale of woe would instantaneously warm his heart with benevolence; but a merry story, or the sudden appearance of a jovial companion, would as quickly chill it with indifference.

It may be readily conceived, he made but little progress in that sound and useful knowledge of his profession, which is best calculated to promote the interest and honour of the student. Yet those very peculiarities of character that rendered him restless, fickle, and volatile, were perhaps the chief causes of his excelling in certain subordinate qualifications, which have counteracted his principal deficiencies. He possessed a remarkable fluency of expression; a happy talent of giving a prompt and pleasing utterance to his thoughts, which dressed up a trifling observation with all the pomp and gravity of wisdom. His other attainments, however light and superficial, were yet general; he knew a little of most subjects, but was not well acquainted with any. This miscellaneous scanty kind of knowledge was exactly suited to his powers of oratory; it enabled him to gain credit for what he never knew, and admiration for talents he never possessed. He separated from his master as soon as the term of his clerkship expired, and proceeded to London with all those glowing expectations,

which might be expected from his age and character. Like others with similar feelings, he experienced similar disappointment and hardships; yet he had sufficient animal spirits to bear up against the one, and economy and prudence enough to support the other. He at length, after many situations and reverses, was engaged by a candidate for a county election to superintend his canvass and committee. This business was exactly adapted to his taste and talents; his activity and volubility were at once called into action, and full scope given for the display of his powers. He made a much better speech than his employer, who feigned himself ill, that this part of the business might be performed by his deputy. In short, his candidate was returned by a large majority; he was, of course, liberally paid for his exertions, and strongly recommended by their success, to employment of a similar kind. The pecuniary rewards he received, enabled him to emerge from the poverty which had so long obscured him; and he talked himself into

parties, where a silent intruder, however meritorious, would never have been endured. He received invitations to grand dinners, routs, and assemblies; he said so much about the fine arts, that he was universally considered to have a fine taste; he purchased bronzes, pictures, and sculpture, and descanted on their beauties with such fluency, that his friends were obliged by being allowed to possess them at an advanced price. In short, he has talked so much, and so eloquently, that his name is become proverbial for fashionable elegance. He lives well at the tables of others, and escapes the expense of keeping one of his own. He derives profit from the pleasures he enjoys, and gains patronage where others would meet with contempt. Thus," continued Osmond, " this man lives in splendour and affluence, while many a poor recluse, with great talents, but few words, have pined away their lives in silent poverty; lost and unknown till that period, when they were neither conscious of praise, nor susceptible of reward."

" His remarks were judicious," said Earlvin, " and his manners respectful."

" Oh! doubtless," answered Osmond, " it is but justice to observe, that his sudden elevation and good fortune have neither inflamed his pride nor contaminated his principles. He is remarkable for the boldness of his assertions, but tenacious of their correctness: they have, however, involved him in many quarrels, and various unpleasant dilemmas; but the engagements that first called forth this part of his oratory, have taught him a method of escaping the disagreeable effects which often result from it."

Mr. Osmond was interrupted from farther remarks, by the approach of Mr. Onslow, the West Indian, conducting Mrs. Earlvin and Caroline Almond. Several gentlemen were in their train, among whom was Lord Trelvin. His lordship stood high in the haut-ton; he was esteemed a very brilliant star in the hemisphere of fashion, and was now in the zenith of his orbit.

But how he had become fashionable, was a very general matter of surprise, even to those who copied his dress, and imitated his manners. Yet he was fashionable, and every cut of his opera-coat, and turn of his vacant face, were assumed by those who aimed to acquire the same elegant notoriety. The eccentricities of his lordship's behaviour would not, to a common observer, have appeared either fascinating or polite; its characteristics were, extreme apathy, negligence, forgetfulness, and stupidity. He said little, and looked as if he thought less. He laughed when others were serious, and was always grave in the midst of mirth and good-humour. His movements were generally languid, and indicative of great fatigue; he gaped with a degree of refined languor, which was accounted remarkably elegant, and sometimes conveyed his snuff towards his lips instead of his nose, during those fits of drowsy absence in which he so greatly excelled. He had been introduced to Mrs. Earlvin, and had exerted himself to say a few civil things on the occasion; he now mechanically followed the party

which followed her, and, had he been walking in his sleep, he would have appeared equally animated and conscious of his own existence.

Felix seized the first opportunity to express to his wife his wish to retire. Mrs. Earlvin did not immediately object to the proposal, but her inclination to remain was very evident. Felix was alarmed; he surveyed the persons who surrounded her with anger, and became impatient and peevish. He placed himself next to her with a determined kind of impetuosity that broke through all ceremony. He made many efforts to join in the sprightly conversation which was going forward, but he said so little to the purpose, and laughed so out of time, that his silence would more effectually have concealed his chagrin. His spleen was increased, by observing his wife's extreme vivacity and satisfaction; he thought he could perceive something of the coquette in her manners. He watched every change in her countenance, and listened to every reply which she made, with trembling anxiety. He fancied she

paid him less attention than usual, and that her answers were cool and sometimes neglectful. He interrupted her in every observation she made to young Onslow, and contradicted her with fretful ill-humour. At length his uneasiness became so evident, that Mrs. Earlvin herself requested their carriage might be ordered. Young Onslow was in the act of offering to hand her to it, when Felix abruptly crossed him, and, rudely seizing her arm, hurried her from the apartments. He remained sullen and silent during their ride home, lost in reflections as various as they were distressing.

The events of the last few hours, although exactly similar to those which any other party of the same description might have produced, were magnified and distorted by him into circumstances of the most serious and alarming nature. The situation in which he had been placed with his wife this evening, had perhaps never before occurred. It has been observed, that their happiness had hitherto, in a great measure, been preserved by

a fortunate seclusion from scenes, that were calculated to rouse the energies of a jealous temper. The calm retirement in which they had lived, and the very limited number of persons with whom they had associated, had happily kept them at a distance from those objects who were likely to endanger their felicity, either from unmeaning levity or artful design.

Mrs. Earlvin was not yet six and twenty; her person and manners were extremely attractive; her temper naturally cheerful, and her disposition amiable, affectionate, and sincere. The purity of her mind rendered her totally free from those affected airs of prudish reserve, which are often assumed for the worst purposes. Yet her manners were in no respect tinctured with the forward levity, that is often so fatally imbibed by a modern education, and so shamefully encouraged by fashionable example. Mrs. Earlvin's conduct should have satisfied the most fastidious husband. Her gaiety resulted from the innocence of an uncorrupted heart; her vivacity excited admiration,

but it was mingled with a modesty and decorum which ensured respect. She did not affect a public display of her regard for her husband, by embarrassing him with a series of fulsome attentions, calculated to create suspicion and produce ridicule; yet her behaviour towards him was sufficiently marked to evince her affections, and demonstrate that preference it was her glory to acknowledge. Although her chief pleasures were centred in the care of her children, and the management of her family, yet she was not insensible to the delights of friendly society and rational amusements. Her partiality for domestic comforts, and her strict attention to domestic duties, neither depressed her spirits nor ruffled her temper. Her good sense taught her the policy of securing her husband's company, by rendering his home more agreeable than any other place; by decorating it with pleasing as well as substantial enjoyments; by embellishing the qualifications of a good mother and a faithful wife, with the fascinating manners of a cheerful and entertaining companion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROGRESS OF JEALOUSY.

ALTHOUGH Mrs. Earlvin discovered some few infirmities in the temper of her husband, even before their marriage, yet it was not till lately that the cause and extent of them occasioned her any anxiety. The events, however, which had recently occurred, produced effects sufficiently powerful to confirm her suspicions, and call forth all her prudence. She perceived the danger and difficulty of her situation, yet her fortitude was not subdued by her fears. Her feelings, on this occasion, prompted her to pursue a line of conduct that might enable her husband to over-

come those fatal delusions which, at intervals, took possession of his mind. She considered his malady as an affliction, and traced its source to an enthusiastic affection for the object of its alarm. She resolved to calm and soothe him by tenderness and good humour, rather than increase his anguish with reproach, or drive him to desperation by actions that were calculated to inflame his disease. The most beneficial effects might have been expected from such resolutions, but they were useless and unavailing. Earlvin, during the paroxysms of his jealousy, saw only with a jaundiced eye; his distorted imagination misconstrued every attempt to relieve his anxiety and restore him to happiness. The subtle intricacies which this passion assumed, in its various effects upon him, were astonishing: an ardent gaze on his wife from a spectator (who was perhaps at the same moment unconscious of the object on which his eyes were fixed), would create pangs in his bosom that shamed and perplexed him, although he had no

power to conceal the agitation they produced. He was often sensible of the cruelty and injustice of his suspicions, and still oftener observed, with admiration, the circumspect attention which Julia paid to her own conduct, even while she suffered under his petulance and ill humour. He passed a restless night after their visit to Mr. Osmond; but when he rose the next morning, his principal uneasiness was occasioned by a conviction of the folly of his behaviour the evening before. He beheld the pale cheeks and inflamed eyes of his wife with agony; he would have asked her forgiveness, but he dared not so openly confess how unworthily he had treated her.

In this state of mind Earlvin sat down to breakfast. The tenderness of his manners, and the anxiety he expressed at the slight complaints of indisposition which Julia made, as an excuse for her languor and want of spirits, soon called forth those smiles of sweetness and good humour that were visible, even in the moments of her affliction. Their children were brought to them

as usual. Earlvin was again conscious of his happiness, and once more enjoyed felicity. He was animated by the vivacity of his infant companions; he talked with them, romped with them, and caressed them, till his sensations were elevated to rapture, and his wife recovered her accustomed gaiety and cheerfulness. At this period a servant entered the apartment, and presented a letter to Mrs. Earlvin.

"From the country, I suppose?" said Julia.

"No, madam," replied the man; "it was delivered by a footman whom I do not recollect to have ever seen before."

Felix involuntarily gave over the amusement in which he was engaged with his eldest boy, and fixed his eyes earnestly on his wife.

"I am entirely unacquainted with the hand," continued Mrs. Earlvin, as she gazed on the superscription.

Felix's countenance betrayed emotion, and the child complained that he did not mind his play. Mrs. Earlvin opened the letter, which contained two cards, and a few lines in the envelope. She inquired if the footman waited for an answer. The servant replied in the negative, and left the room. Julia instantly handed the paper to her husband. "They are tickets," said she, "for a grand masquerade, which is to be given to-morrow evening at the opera-house. I must confess, I have often wished for an opportunity of witnessing this amusement, without being subjected to the insults to which a common spectator is liable. Mr. Onslow is so good as to offer us places in a private box which belongs to one of his friends. Mr. Osmond and Miss Almond are also to be there."

Earlvin did not immediately answer this observation; he complained of a head-ache, and declined any farther play with his children, who quitted the apartment vexed and disappointed at the abrupt conclusion of their sports.

"I must confess, Julia," said Felix, after some moments' reflection, "that were I in Mr. Onslow's situation, I should be rather cautious of introducing Miss Almond to this species of amusement. The barrier of a private box is incapable of preserving her from the contagion of so licentious and indelicate a pastime; even in that situation, she is liable to be addressed by those who, under the mummery and disguise of a fictitious character, may talk and act in a manner they would not venture to assume in their real one."

"Still," answered Mrs. Earlvin, "under the protection of friends, and guarded by the watchful eye of a husband——"

"Guarded by the watchful eye of a husband!" repeated Earlvin; "a wife, Julia, should never voluntarily place herself in a situation where such protection is requisite."

"At all events," said Mrs. Earlvin, "you

must allow it is extremely obliging in Mr. Onslow to present us with these tickets."

"Mr. Onslow," replied Earlvin, with increased discomposure, "appears a gay, thoughtless, and flippant young man; and I must confess, that neither his arrangements for conducting Miss Almond to a public masquerade, nor the invitation he has sent us to join the party, give me a more favourable opinion, either of his character or understanding."

"Felix," said Mrs. Earlvin, "it is evidently your wish that I should forego this amusement. I am well aware that you would not deprive me of a pleasure which could be enjoyed with propriety. I have every right to confide in your judgement on this point; therefore I most willingly resign my ticket: but," continued she, with a smile of the most perfect good humour, "I must be rewarded for my obedience. You must grant me *one* favour in return."

" A thousand," exclaimed Earlvin, with ecstasy, while he pressed her to his bosom ; " your goodness on this occasion is more than I deserve : for heaven's sake, do not let me thwart your inclination."

" My inclination is to remain at home," said Julia ; " but will you promise to grant me this request ?"

" Solemnly," answered Felix.

" It is," replied Mrs. Earlvin, " that you will make use of one of these tickets by going yourself to the masquerade."

Felix, who had not the least desire to partake of any amusement from which he might wish to preclude his wife, would willingly have objected to this arrangement ; but Julia urged the impropriety of a direct refusal to an offer of civility, from a person whom Mr. Osmond so particularly

considered as his friend. This reason, although it had some force, was not perhaps the only one which influenced Mrs. Earlvin's conduct; it was probable, she wished to convey a gentle reproof to her husband, by adopting a line of conduct so different and superior to his own.

The extraordinary alteration in Mr. Osmond's behaviour and style of living was a subject of much surprise and conjecture to them both. Mrs. Earlvin had but few opportunities of private conversation with Caroline Almond during the evening of their visit. She, however, understood, that their journey to London had been purposely arranged for introducing her to young Onslow, who, her guardian had determined, should be her husband. He did not conceive it requisite to qualify this abrupt resolution by any stipulation as to her own choice; he declared that Mr. Onslow's person and manners were undeniable; that he had lately become possessed of a large fortune, and that these circumstances rendered him anx-

ious for their union. He prevented any reply, by a look which rendered her incapable of making one. On the following day, he hurried her to London, and attempted, by seeming tenderness and unusual indulgence, to palliate the cruelty of his conduct. It was evident that the West Indian had made no progress in Caroline's affections. The very distant civility of her behaviour towards him, and the languid indifference with which she listened to every thing he said, evinced the little interest she took in his conversation. Her spirits seemed rather depressed than exhilarated by the luxury and gaiety that surrounded her, and she failed to remonstrate against the arrangements that were going forward, because she was awed into silence by the severity of her guardian. It appeared, also, a matter of surprise, that Mr. Osmond, who had been for several years a recluse in a distant county of England, should so suddenly have been enabled to mix with a large and fashionable society in London. There were, however, some circumstances which, in part, explained this point.

He had, in early life, been well known in the higher classes of dissipated company; a few of his old associates were still living, whose rank and fortunes procured them a considerable influence in the first circles. To these men Osmond discovered himself immediately on his arrival in London. His manners, though austere, were gentlemanly, and his landed property was known to be extensive. These qualifications authorized his reception into every party, and were sufficient, with the aid of his former connexions, to produce even more invitations than he chose to accept, and as many visitors as he wished to entertain.

Perhaps there is not a more prominent feature in the passion this history attempts to delineate, than that unceasing restlessness and anxiety which prompted Felix Earlvin to those reflections that were the source of his misery. Every trifling event or foolish incident which happened to flash upon his mind during such periods,

were formed by him into delusions that nourished his disease, and increased his anguish. His wife had not quitted him ten minutes after her resignation of the masquerade-ticket, when he began to muse on the very anxious desire she had expressed that he would himself attend the entertainment. He commented upon this circumstance, and viewed it in so many various shapes, that it very shortly became shadowed with the same gloomy tints which generally pervaded the objects of his reveries.

"She never before," said he to himself, "expressed so anxious a wish for my absence: it might perhaps be occasioned by her desire that I should partake of this amusement, though I was inclined to deprive her of it. Such a motive would not please me, and I should have been much better satisfied, if she had requested me to have remained at home. I could give up every pleasure for her society. Our feelings, on this point, should be mutual. I almost wish we had

not removed from the country. The gaiety and dissipation of London would endanger the purity of an angel."

Earlvin soliloquised in this manner near a quarter of an hour; at the expiration of which, he was the most wretched of human beings.

These wild sallies of his imagination raised phantoms which harassed him with doubts and perplexities, yet their effects were limited; there were periods when he recovered his usual serenity, and was sensible of his happiness. Though not of long duration, yet they were sufficient to counteract those alarming emotions of agony, or despair, that might have been produced by a series of circumstances capable of exciting his jealousy, with a progressive degree of violence unallayed by intervals of returning reason. A succession of occurrences of this description were not likely to arise from common events; they were only to be expected from arrangements purposely designed to produce them. We have hitherto beheld the

subject of this memoir in those situations which were best calculated to ensure his felicity. No one has appeared, either with inclination to disturb his repose, or accomplishments to excite his envy. In short, from the day of his marriage, to the time at which this history is arrived, every incident of his life should have added to his blessings, and called forth his gratitude. We are now, however, to view him under circumstances of a very different nature; he is no longer to be observed as an agent influenced merely by general causes; or considered as a passive and inactive sufferer under the fatal delusion that oppressed him. But he is to be marked as the victim of perfidious plans, formed for the destruction of his happiness, and founded on those symptoms of jealousy which he so often publicly evinced in his manners and conduct. It was this part of his character only that was vulnerable to his enemies; yet it exposed him to attacks of the most alarming and dangerous nature.

On the evening of the masquerade, Earlvin

proceeded alone to the opera-house in a plain domino. He made no attempt to join the party from whom he had received his ticket, but mixed with the company in the body of the theatre. As he witnessed the noisy and tumultuous merriment of the motley groups that surrounded him, he congratulated himself on the absence of his wife, and experienced something like conviction of the propriety of those notions which had urged him to deprive her of so dissipated an entertainment. He was induced, after some little time, from the warmth of the place, to take off his mask for a few minutes, while he seated himself on one of the benches that surrounded the promenade. In this situation, while employed in surveying the tier of boxes where he expected to discover Mr. Onslow and his friends, he was suddenly accosted by a domino, whose voice immediately reminded him of the loquacious gentleman he had so lately met at the house of Mr. Osmond.

"I am heartily glad to see you, sir," he ex-

claimed; "I should have discovered you in an instant, even if your face had been concealed by your mask."

"That is very possible, sir," answered Earlvin, "for I recognise you under similar circumstances. Your voice is sufficient to convince me that I had the pleasure of conversing with you a few evenings past at the house of a friend."

"Exactly so, perfectly correct," answered Mr. Parrot. "Many persons of distinction here to-night, sir, under very singular characters; and, to say the truth, there are some who cannot assume a worse than their real one: excuse my freedom, I am apt to give my opinion on these points."

Earlvin, who was not at present inclined to listen to the effusions of Parrot's oratory, suddenly rose from his seat, and, declaring that he had some friends in one of the boxes on the op-

posite side, was in the act of wishing him a good night, when a part of the company rushed towards the spot where they stood, and, in the midst of them, was a figure that appeared to be the cause of their amusement. It was a female mask dressed in a strange and novel manner, evidently intended as the representative of an obi witch.

The fantastic form of her garments, and the various colours of which they were composed, evinced considerable taste and ingenuity; her visor was well painted, and from a chain that crossed her shoulders was suspended a large horn, the supposed receptacle of the ingredients from which she derived her power. The crowd that followed her, was occasioned merely by the singularity of her appearance; for they were unable to draw her into conversation. Earlvin, who thought he could perceive a degree of alarm and confusion in her manner that indicated she needed assistance, was induced to remonstrate

with those who pursued her, which excited their merriment, and increased their numbers. The mask no sooner witnessed his interference in her behalf than she seemed resolved to throw herself on his protection, for she immediately seized his arm, and precipitately quitted the place. Earlvin, although somewhat chagrined at this sudden and public claim to his exertions, was yet unable to refuse his aid; and those who surrounded them, supposing that the object of their entertainment belonged to his party, immediately dispersed in search of new adventures and amusement. Felix retired with his unknown companion to another part of the theatre; and, when arrived at a sufficient distance from the place in which she had been annoyed, he observed, that, as she was then free from molestation, he must take his leave of her, as he was expected by some friends whom he had promised to join. The obi woman, for the first time, now addressed him, in words which were characteristic of the form she had assumed. "It is not in my power," said she, "to reward

your gallantry by the disclosure of a beautiful countenance, or by a sudden transformation from the infirmities of age to the sprightly vigour of youth; my form is withered by years, and my face is as wrinkled as my mask; yet I can convince you of my gratitude by the exertions of my obi art."

"I require no reward," returned Earlvin, gaily, "nor am I a proper object for your magic. I have no faith, and am therefore undeserving of benefit."

"You must, at least, be convinced of my ability," said the mask; "shall I relate the past, or foretel the future? Will you have a question answered; a wish gratified; or a caution given?"

Earlvin smiled at the eccentricity of her offers.

"I have but little curiosity," he replied,

" and therefore seldom ask questions; my wishes are very limited, even at a masquerade; as for your third gift, I shall be very happy to receive it, but in as few words as possible."

" *Look to your wife*," exclaimed the mask. Earlvin remained motionless with astonishment, while the obi woman escaped from his sight in an instant. It was some minutes before he recovered himself sufficiently to seek for the person who had occasioned his emotions; but his attempts to discover her were fruitless; he visited every part of the theatre that was opened for the reception of the masks without success, till wearied and disappointed, he seated himself near the place where he had first seen her. He had remained here but a few moments before he was addressed by Mr. Osmond, who, having rallied him on the absence of Mrs. Earlvin, proposed to conduct him to the box in which he had left his ward and several other friends. Earlvin followed him with reluctance, although he made some efforts to appear pleased with the invitation. The

party were all in dominoes; Mr. Onslow received him with great politeness; inquired very particularly after Mrs. Earlvin's health, and expressed much concern for the slight indisposition which Felix alleged as the cause of her remaining at home. Caroline Almond seemed to take little interest either in the conversation of the West Indian, or the groups to which her attention was directed; she was the only female in the party, her situation was embarrassing, and she had apparently neither spirits nor inclination to support it. There were several gentlemen in the box, among whom was Lord Trelvin stretched at full length on one of the seats in the back part, with his eyes nearly closed, and his mouth half open.

"Why, curse it, Ned!" said one of his noble friends, whose frivolous loquacity and incessant restlessness, was as ridiculous as his lordship's languid taciturnity, "how the devil can you manage to doze in such a place as this? A man might as well attempt to sleep in the midst of Bartholomew fair:—dam'me, if I think there was

ever such a confusion of sounds since that which took place at the building of Babel. Curse it, how warm it is!—Look at that punch; dam'me, how he dances! Did you see my mare to-day?—Jack Dixon's groom says she has got a spavin;—cursed unfortunate. Who the devil pays for all these candles?"

Such was the refined conversation of this elegant young lord: his effusions, however, did not conclude with his question concerning the candles, for his lordship never waited for a reply; he continued his sagacious remarks and apt inquiries without interruption for near ten minutes, when, being somewhat at a loss for matter as well as words, he suddenly burst out into a few wild notes of different tunes, pitching his voice to several keys, the lowest of which rendered him audible at some distance. After amusing himself in this way for a short time, he varied the entertainment by whistling some of the shakes and quavers with much vigour and shrillness. Having at length exhausted all his enlivening powers, his

actions manifested a considerable degree of disquietude; his body and limbs were in continual motion; he played with his hat, took snuff, moved from one seat to another, shook his head, adjusted his neckcloth, brushed up his hair, and, at last, sprang out of the box like a harlequin, closing the door after him with a violence which electrified the whole party. Even Lord Trelvin's nerves were so far affected as to produce some degree of motion in his body, and call forth the sound of his voice.

"These masquerades are excessive great bores," he exclaimed; "they are most wearisome and fatiguing amusements, I do most solemnly affirm."—His lordship at this instant was taken with a violent fit of gaping, and forgot to finish his sentence.

"Now, to me," cried young Onslow, "they are, of all entertainments, the most desirable. Can any thing be more delightful than the fairy scene which surrounds us? Brilliant

illuminations, charming music, lovely women, and unbounded freedom."

"Those are the sentiments of a libertine," thought Earlvin, who again congratulated himself on the absence of his wife. Lord Trelvin, to whom Onslow had principally addressed his observations, gazed on him for some moments with his usual apathy, and then exclaimed: "You have most outrageous spirits; a complete plethora of happiness."

"I confess, I have a most complete relish for the various enjoyments which are placed within my grasp," answered Onslow. "I was reared under a tropical sun, its scorching rays have tinged my complexion, and warmed my heart. I make no professions of philosophy or forbearance; I may be accused of imprudence, but will never be guilty of hypocrisy."

"Yet that sincerity and openness of character, sir," said Earlvin, "on which you seem

to lay so much stress, does not, in my opinion, excuse a foolish act, or palliate a vicious one."

Whatever truth there might be in this observation, it was certainly abrupt, and evinced a degree of rudeness on the part of Felix with which he could seldom be charged. In fact, the spleen and ill-humour he felt towards this young man, had originated during their first meeting, and increased ever since. He mused on the present of the masquerade tickets till he almost considered it as an insult; and these feelings became more powerful as he progressively became acquainted with the leading traits in Onslow's character. Instead, however, of a hasty reply to Earlvin's remarks, his attention seemed suddenly attracted by some one in the body of the theatre, and he soon after precipitately quitted the box under some degree of confusion, merely observing, that he should return in a few minutes.

Felix now seated himself next to Miss Almond,

who cautiously watched an opportunity to speak to him unobserved.

" Will you do me the favour," said she in a whisper, " to say to Mrs. Earlvin how anxiously I wish for a few moments' conversation with her in private. If she would honour me with a call to-morrow morning so early as twelve, I may perhaps be enabled to converse with her alone. I am well aware, my dear sir, of the liberty I take in making this request, but I am certain she will forgive me when I relate the circumstances that have urged me to it."

Earlvin promised to deliver the message, and pledged himself for Julia's immediate acquiescence to her wishes. After a short time, he took his leave, and proceeded to the corridore, resolving on another attempt to discover the obi mask. With this resolution he walked towards the company, when, in crossing a private passage which led from the stage to the boxes, he perceived her at a short distance in earnest conversation with a

domino exactly similar in colour to that of young Onslow's. He stopped for a few moments to observe more particularly the dress of her companion, and was convinced, from the appearance of his hat, and other circumstances, that it was Onslow himself. Being masked, and in a plain black domino, Felix was under no apprehension of discovery: he therefore seated himself near the part where they stood, and resolved to wait for an opportunity when he might be enabled to address the obi woman alone. Their conference lasted a considerable time, and, at intervals, they spoke sufficiently loud for him to hear some parts of their conversation. Their gestures and manner evinced a great degree of irritation, which elevated their voices, and probably prevented them from observing their situation.

"Is such a place as this," cried Onslow, "either calculated for your age or circumstances? Have you not the means to procure every comfort and luxury from the liberal settlement I have made upon you? Why, therefore, should you

haunt me thus, and hazard my character and reputation, by a discovery that would be injurious to us both?"

"I will not be thwarted," answered the obi mask; "I will not accept of any luxuries or comforts which are only to be enjoyed in disgraceful obscurity. I have sought the present opportunity, once more, to repeat my resolution on this subject."

Here her voice was lowered. Felix heard only a word or two at intervals; but he conceived she was relating the resolutions she had taken, by the vehement actions which accompanied her speaking. At length Onslow replied with increased anger;—"I care not for your threats or upbraidings: I am neither alarmed by the one nor affected by the other. I am conscious of having even exceeded the wishes of my deceased friend, in the arrangements I have made for your welfare; you are therefore at liberty to pursue what course you please; I would willing-

ly preserve your friendship, but I do not fear your hatred." Having uttered these words, he hurried from the place, and the mask proceeded immediately through the body of the theatre to the entrance hall, where she seemed preparing for her departure. Earlvin was still irresolute on the plans he should adopt, when she, for an instant, removed the visor from her face, and he beheld, with astonishment, the same features which, a few months past, had so considerably excited his curiosity during one of his evening walks. The event alluded to has already been related in the first chapter of this volume.

After a few moments' reflection, Earlvin determined again to address her, but, before he had resolved on the questions he should ask, one of the waiters informed her he had procured her a coach, and she immediately left the hall. He followed her to the entrance, where he found Parrot, who was also leaving the theatre. Having hastily drawn him on one side, he requested to know if he could

give him any information relative to the obi mask. "I have the most urgent reasons," said Felix, "for the inquiry."

"Upon my honour," answered the orator, "I have the same curiosity without any reasons at all. I confess she has puzzled *me*."

"Is there no possibility of discovering her abode?" answered Earlvin.

"Nothing more easy," replied Parrot; "my servant is here, who is the very man for the purpose; he excels in these kind of discoveries. I will dispatch him instantly."

By this time, the mask was entering the hackney-coach that had been provided for her, and the orator having given directions to his servant, the fellow jumped up behind the carriage with an assurance which seemed to confirm that he belonged to the person who was within it, while his master promised Earlvin, that the information he

required should be handed to him with his breakfast the next morning. Felix quitted the opera-house, and proceeded towards his home, lost in reflections on the events that had occurred during the evening. He attempted to trace the connexion which they seemed to have with his own concerns, but his reveries bewildered his imagination, and increased his anxiety. In this state of mind he arrived at his own house. His valet was in waiting, and, to his inquiries, if any person had called in his absence, replied, only a gentleman, who he believed came on a visit to his lady. Earlvin asked the name of this visitor with eagerness and alarm; the next moment he felt conscious of the impropriety of his conduct, and, in attempting to recover his composure, more completely exposed his embarrassment.

The valet replied, it was Mr. Herbert, of Monmouthshire.

Earlvin was now incapable of commanding his feelings; he ordered his servant to leave him,

and, throwing himself on a sofa, experienced the most agonising sensations.

"It is very evident," said he, "why she was so anxious for my attending the masquerade: she was doubtless aware of Herbert's visit, and wished for my absence. She should not have received him: she has several times heard me express a dislike to his character, and common delicacy should have prompted her to have been denied to him. It is most extraordinary that she should evince so strong a partiality for one whom she has scarcely seen a dozen times, and who, in my opinion, has nothing to recommend him to the notice of a prudent woman."

Felix attempted to account for the caution of the obi mask, and her conference with Onslow, by the most wild and absurd conjectures, which he extended to various trivial circumstances that had occurred many months since. He retired to his bed, but was incapable of repose; his slumbers were broken

and disturbed, and he rose the next morning with a countenance that forcibly expressed his anxiety and distress. He answered the affectionate inquiries of his wife with petulance and ill temper, and listened to her account of Herbert's visit in sullen silence. The reasons she alleged for it were plain and satisfactory; yet they neither relieved his uneasiness nor restored his good-humour.

Herbert, who was seldom capable of subduing his inclinations or restraining the warmth and impetuosity in his pursuits, which formed the principal traits in his character, had suddenly, and unknown to his friends, quitted the university, with a determination of procuring an interview with Caroline Almond in London. He discovered Earlvin's residence from the waiter at an hotel where he arrived, and, without farther hesitation, proceeded immediately to his house, under a hope of gaining such points of information relative to Mr. Osmond and his ward, that might enable him to meet the latter without

subjecting himself to the ill behaviour of her guardian.

Earlvin waited with anxious expectation for the intelligence Parrot had so confidently promised to communicate to him. He retired to his study immediately after his breakfast, without partaking of his usual amusement with his children or conversation with his wife. He attempted to read, but found it impossible to direct his attention to his books; his whole mind was employed on the events of the preceding evening. It was near two hours after the time which Parrot had appointed, and Felix, with spleen and vexation, had made up his mind as to the frivolity of his character and the uncertainty of his promises, when the orator was suddenly announced.

"I am extremely sorry, sir," said Earlvin on his entrance, "that my foolish curiosity should have occasioned you this trouble; a few lines by your servant would have been sufficient for an affair of so little consequence."

" Pardon me, sir," replied Parrot, " but the discoveries I have made are somewhat of a delicate nature, nor are they of such trivial importance as you may probably imagine."

Earlvin became pale: he trembled with alarm, and requested Mr. Parrot would take a seat, while he cautiously closed the door of the apartment.

" You must be informed, sir," said Parrot, " that my servant, who attended the carriage in which the obi mask departed from the theatre, found that she resided next door to a house where a friend of his has been some time in service. With this friend he had an interview early this morning. Now, it fortunately happens, that a fellow-servant in the same family was formerly Mr. Onslow's groom; he engaged with him on his arrival at Bristol from Jamaica, and has quitted his employment but three weeks. You perceive, sir, that our information has a tolerable good source."

" Certainly," answered Felix, who expressed much impatience for the intelligence he had to communicate.

" Then, sir," continued Parrot, " the substance of it is as follows:—The assumed name of the lady who appeared as the obi mask, is Lorimer; she is a woman turned of fifty, and the mother of Mr. Onslow."

" His mother!" exclaimed Felix with astonishment, " impossible! Why is she thus concealed in obscurity, while her son is ushered into life with a degree of splendour that draws upon him the attention of the whole town?"

" Because," continued Parrot, " such a discovery would probably draw upon him the contempt of the whole town. Mrs. Lorimer was originally the wife of an industrious tradesman in London, whose circumstances she embarrassed by her extravagance, and whose heart she at length broke by her infidelity. A few weeks after

his death she changed her name, and formed a connexion with a young man of good fortune and family. She had but one child by her husband, a boy about two years old. Incapable of subduing the natural violence of her disposition, a few months were sufficient to expose her real character to her young gallant, and counteract those effects which the charms of her person had produced. Some affairs of considerable consequence fortunately at this crisis demanded his presence at Jamaica: before his departure, he settled an annuity on Mrs. Lorimer, that secured to her a comfortable independence as long as she acted with sufficient propriety to deserve it. Mr. Wellsford (which was the name of the gentleman to whom I have alluded), on his arrival in the West Indies, became possessed, by the decease of an uncle, of very large property in sugar plantations, which rendered it absolutely necessary that he should settle on the island where they were situated. Having formed this determination, he soon after married the daughter of a French merchant, whose estates were contiguous to his own. The

beauty of this young lady so far dazzled his understanding, as to prevent his observing a considerable degree of levity in her conduct. In less than three years after their marriage, she eloped from her husband, with their only child, an infant but twelve months old. Mr. Wellsford's feelings were severely wounded by this event; his pride, however, aided him to support it. He resolved to make no exertions to recover a woman who had so cruelly injured him; his principal regret was the loss of his child, on whose account he took some measures to trace the course of its mother, but without effect. Having at this time received information from a friend in England of the very flagrant ill-conduct of Mrs. Lorimer, he offered to take upon himself the charge of her son, provided she would allow him to be sent to Jamaica and educated under his own inspection. To this proposal Mrs. Lorimer immediately acceded, and the boy was delivered to Mr. Wellsford a few months after the offer was made of his protection. He had evinced a considerable partiality for the child before he left Eng-

land; the loss of his own infant, and pity for the unfortunate situation of the one he had adopted, urged him to these arrangements, which were considered by many as precipitate and impolitic.

"Mr. Wellsford, in the course of three years, received information of the death of his wife, but was unable to discover the route of her seducer, or gain any intelligence of his daughter. His habits and disposition were particularly adapted for social comforts, and he resolved once more to venture on a matrimonial connexion. His addresses were accepted by a young lady of considerable beauty, who was under the protection of an aunt in Jamaica. Their union took place in the course of a few months, and the following year, Mr. Wellsford again beheld himself the father of a lovely girl. His happiness now seemed complete; the attention and tenderness of his second wife, recompensed him for the ill treatment he had received from his first; and he looked forward to years of genuine felicity. The fallacy, however, of those sanguine anticipations,

which men are too apt to encourage under such circumstances, was fully exemplified in the events that followed. His wife was suddenly seized with a fever peculiar to the country, and died during the infancy of her child. Mr. Wellsford, again bereft of the enjoyments he had so anxiously hoped to preserve, resolved to dedicate the remaining part of his life to the care and education of his beloved daughter. It seemed, however, that he was yet doomed to experience the bitterness of disappointment, by the destruction of his last and only hope. The health of his daughter gradually declined after the death of her mother, and he was at length informed by the physicians who attended her, that the only chance of preserving her life was her immediate removal to England. Mr. Wellsford now resolved to dispose of his plantations and return to his native country. The necessary arrangements, however, for these plans, imperiously demanded his presence for some time on the island; fearful that the delay might prove fatal to his child, he was induced to send her off before him under the pro-

tection of his brother-in-law, who was then going to England on his own concerns. Mr. Wellsford was detained far beyond the time he had fixed for his departure, and received the melancholy information of his daughter's death before he had finally closed his affairs. This heart-rending intelligence cast a gloom over all his future prospects, and it was several months before he could be persuaded to associate with his friends or partake of his usual amusements. He had now no incitements to remove from a country where friendly intercourse had produced much interest and partiality. He therefore determined to give up his intended voyage to England, and pass the remainder of his days in Jamaica, while his young protégé became his principal companion, and was considered as his adopted son. In the education of this youth, and the practice of various acts of benevolence towards his numerous slaves and dependants, Mr. Wellsford endeavoured to tranquillise those feelings of regret and sorrow, which the afflictions of his early life had called forth. A few years be-

fore his death, he retired to one of his estates a short distance from the capital of the island. On his decease, Mr. Onslow became possessed of the principal part of his fortune; he was also nominated one of his executors, and, after settling the various business attached to this office, he quitted Jamaica with only one attendant, and arrived in England a few months since. By this attendant," continued Mr. Parrot, " the history of his master was related to the English servant whom Mr. Onslow engaged on his arrival at Bristol, and from the English servant it was most faithfully conveyed to my man at an early hour this morning."

Earlvin felt considerably relieved by this relation; there appeared nothing to justify the alarms which Parrot's introduction to it had occasioned. Mrs. Lorimer's knowledge of his name and person might have been acquired without difficulty, and the absurd insinuation she uttered under the disguise of her masquerade-habit, the mere effects of wanton mischief. Felix's

principal anxiety was now to impress upon his visitor the very little interest he took in the information, while he apologised for the trouble it had occasioned him. Parrot declared he was amply compensated on this point, by the pleasure of obliging a friend, and the opportunity of acquiring a few curious anecdotes of a fashionable character, whose history was so little known as that of Mr. Onslow. He paused, however, for some time, as if he had not entirely completed his task, while Earlvin waited for his departure with impatience, that he might make some concessions to his wife for his behaviour at breakfast. At length, after considerable hesitation and apparent diffidence, he declared that he had another circumstance to mention, which he considered of a very delicate and peculiar nature.

Earlvin's agitation returned; he requested, in a faltering voice, that Mr. Parrot would resume his seat, and he again cautiously closed the door he had already opened for his departure.

" Upon my honour, sir," continued the visitor, " I feel some little embarrassment in communicating to you a matter that in justice I cannot conceal. I shall occasion you perhaps a degree of anxiety for which there may be no efficient cause."

" Mr. Parrot," exclaimed Earlvin, with a warmth and energy that equally surprised and alarmed the orator, " you torture me by this preface; for heaven's sake inform me at once what it is you mean."

" Good God!" replied Parrot, " I had no idea I should have thus agitated you."

" *I am not* agitated," answered Felix, while his voice trembled with emotion, " I am perfectly composed; but, I must confess, you have strongly excited my curiosity."

" Then sir, thus it is," replied Parrot; " Mr.

Onslow shortly after his arrival in England, had an interview with Mrs. Earlvin at your house in the country, during *your absence;* a circumstance, I must confess, somewhat extraordinary, as I witnessed her introduction to that gentleman as a perfect stranger on the evening I had first the pleasure of meeting you at Mr. Osmond's."

This intelligence was as a thunderbolt to Earlvin: yet a moment's reflection seemed to convince him that it must be false, and he inquired if it rested on the same authority as the other parts of the information.

" Why sir," replied Parrot, " the authority is certainly the same, but the circumstances were detailed with a minuteness that leaves but little doubt of their truth. Mr. Onslow on his arrival from Jamaica, as I before mentioned, landed at Bristol, where he hired his English servant who has related these particulars. The first employment on which this man was engaged by his new master, was to attend him into Monmouthshire,

while his black domestic remained on board the vessel in which they arrived. They took up their residence at rather an obscure inn in the town of Monmouth; and it was evidently Mr. Onslow's wish to remain unknown in this place. He had several conferences with a person who resided at a small distance, and who, by the description, I have every reason to suppose was Mr. Osmond himself. On one particular evening, however, his man was desired to proceed to the garden entrance of your dwelling, and inquire of any of the servants whom he might accidentally meet, if their master was at home. Upon his informing Mr. Onslow that you were absent on your evening walk, he was directed to saddle his horse, which he immediately mounted, muffled up in a great-coat, and proceeded to that part where his servant had procured the information of your absence. The man was ordered to follow him on foot at a small distance. Mr. Onslow passed the principal front of the building more than once, as if he waited for a signal of admittance. After a short interval, a female servant appeared at the

garden-entrance, to say that her mistress was ready to receive him. He alighted and entered the house, and his man remained with the horse a short distance from the gate. Mr. Onslow re-appeared in about half an hour, and directed his servant to return, while he again mounted and proceeded with much speed down a retired road that skirts the back of your orchard, and did not arrive at his inn till the latter part of the evening. A short time after this event, they departed for London, where Mr. Onslow purchased a large house, and formed a handsome establishment. He also engaged a genteel suite of apartments for his mother; they are the same in which she now resides, and where she is often visited by her son. His servant, who generally attended him on these visits, was informed, that the family in the next house were in want of a footman, and conceiving that the situation would be more profitable to him than the service in which he was then engaged, he gave his master warning, and the following week removed to his new place. These sir," continued Parrot, " are the whole of the

particulars I have at present been able to collect, but I have no doubt that, in a short time, I shall glean many more of a very curious and interesting nature."

Earlvin remained for some time lost in the various reflections Parrot's intelligence produced. The recollection of the evening on which he had first seen Mrs. Lorimer near his own residence, immediately flashed upon his mind. The horseman with whom she was engaged in conversation, he had no doubt was her son; and he also remembered the observation of Dr. Sulfit the following day, that a person of similar description had been seen to pass his house more than once in the course of the evening. These circumstances conveyed a strong suspicion that the interview between Onslow and Mrs. Earlvin, to which Parrot had alluded, took place on this very night. Although the emotions of Felix were too powerful to be concealed from the inquisitive eyes of his visitor, yet he was well aware of the danger of exposing his feelings before one so well calcu-

lated to publish them to the world. Under these considerations, he struggled to assume a composure he was totally incapable of maintaining. He made many attempts to change the subject of their conversation, but resumed it again, by interrupting every other. He replied to observations he scarcely heard, and talked with volubility on points in which his thoughts had no share. Even the smiles he forced into his countenance, could not disguise the anguish of his heart; and, while he vainly supposed himself secure from the penetrating glances of Parrot, his anxiety and agitation would have been discovered by a child. The orator, who was neither destitute of humanity nor good-nature, beheld the effects of his information with much alarm; he began to urge the probability that there might be some error in the statement; that the assertions of a discarded servant were not to be entirely depended upon, and that such an interview might have taken place, without any degree of criminality being attached to it.

" Criminality, sir!" repeated Felix with a degree of irritation, which at once determined his visitor to make no farther attempts at consolation; " you will excuse my warmth, Mr. Parrot, but that expression is far too strong, even as a supposition."

The orator apologised with much civility, and rose to depart.

Earlvin would have detained him by various inquiries he had already answered, and a continuance of those attempts at gaiety and indifference in which he had so completely failed, but Parrot was too well aware of his situation to remain; he promised his services at any future time when they might be required, but declared he had at present an appointment that should have been fulfilled an hour before. He therefore took his leave with as much politeness as his anxiety to get away would admit, and most heartily congratulated himself on his escape as soon as he had gained the street.

Earlvin remained in his study for a considerable time, brooding over the information he had received. He had never before experienced sensations so poignant and distressing. Hitherto his suspicions had been confined within his own bosom, but his disgrace, whether imaginary or real, would now probably be known to the whole town. It was in vain he endeavoured to calm the violence of his emotions and form resolutions on the conduct he should adopt. One moment he determined instantly to communicate to his wife the tale that had been related to him; the next, he resolved to procure further proofs of its authenticity. Rage, hope, and despair, alternately took possession of his bosom; for although at intervals he flattered himself with the probability of being deceived, yet a mere consideration that the contrary was not impossible, drove him almost to distraction. At length he rang his bell, and inquired if Mrs. Earlvin had left home? The servant answered that his mistress had ordered the carriage, and was, he believed, gone to Mr. Osmond's. Felix had forgot-

ten the message he had delivered from Caroline Almond, and instantly construed the visit into an assignation with Onslow. Unable to support the reflections which crowded on his brain, he suddenly seized his hat and hurried from the house, almost unconscious of his actions, and without any settled purpose in view.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DECEIVER DECEIVED.

The alarming and increasing influence which Earlvin's passion seemed to have acquired over him since his arrival in London, was observed by his wife with much apprehension and anxiety. She had already determined to use every exertion in her power to persuade him to return to the country, and to seclude herself as much as possible from company and amusements during the time they might remain in town. Nor were these resolutions considered by Mrs. Earlvin as sacrifices to her happiness. Her comforts were centred in domestic retirement, where, encircled by her husband and children, every wish of her heart was gratified, and her most sanguine hopes of

felicity realised. The peculiar circumstances under which she had been educated, however threatening they might have been to her welfare, in some degree served to strengthen her notions of propriety. The dangerous examples which the dissolute life of her father set before her, were happily counteracted by the affectionate care of an amiable and enlightened woman, whom he selected as her instructress. Julia acquired under this excellent monitress, those sure and solid principles of virtue, which enlarged with her understanding, and secured her amidst scenes that otherwise might have proved her destruction.

It was from such principles, grafted in a mind naturally strong, as well as richly cultivated, that Mrs. Earlvin derived a power of reasoning on the events that afflicted her, and was enabled, not only to derive consolation from her reflections, but to adopt a line of conduct which was best calculated to soothe the unfortunate malady of her husband. His appearance and manner on the morning which followed his visit to the masque-

rade, evinced symptoms more powerful and expressive than any she had yet observed, and she left home on the requested visit to Caroline Almond with considerable reluctance. On her arrival at Mr. Osmond's, she was immediately conducted to Caroline, who was alone, and received her with evident marks of satisfaction. Her appearance, however, indicated much alarm and uneasiness. Mrs. Earlvin understood that her guardian had, the day before, very forcibly urged her union with Mr. Onslow, and declared his determination that the ceremony should take place without delay. Caroline had scarcely communicated this information, when Osmond entered the apartment. He appeared in extreme good humour, and requested his ward would copy a letter he had just written and left in his library. Mrs. Earlvin experienced an unusual degree of embarrassment from this interruption, and immediately rose to depart, when he requested she would give him her opinion of some jewels he intended to present to Caroline on her wedding-

day. Julia complied with this request, but with a degree of reluctance she seldom evinced. The diamonds were extremely beautiful; and tastefully arranged in various ornaments, which were placed together in a small case.

Osmond expatiated on their value, and described their brilliancy with an earnestness somewhat different from his usual cold and declamatory mode of address. Julia was too much engaged with her own reflections to observe the variation in his manner; so little interest did his conversation at this time excite in her, that she scarcely heard half a dozen words which he uttered, while she pensively gazed on the jewels she still held in her hand. Osmond paused for a few moments; his penetrating eyes cautiously glanced on her face; and he thought he could perceive in it expressions for which he had long sought. Slow, crafty, and designing, he checked the sudden impulse of exultation which even his suspicions were capable of producing, while his ideas rapidly suc-

ceeded each other, on the means he should adopt to ascertain the truth of his conjectures. At length, with a countenance of assumed gravity, and tone of affected tenderness, he interrupted Mrs. Earlvin's reverie. " I am well convinced, my dear madam, that the success of the arrangements I am thus anxiously making for my young ward's happiness, will not depend on the splendour or wealth that are attached to them."

The sigh which this observation called forth from Julia, seemed a favourable omen to her artful companion, and encouraged him to proceed with more forcible experiments.

" There are," he continued, " many evils to be dreaded in the married state, not to be obviated by rank and affluence. Many prejudices and passions which, although not considered as actual vices, yet materially interfere with matrimonial happiness."

It is uncertain how far these remarks affected Mrs. Earlvin, as to the hints they were intended to convey, but, on those points to which they seemed more openly to refer, she felt unusual interest; and although she had lately avoided Osmond, (more from her dislike of his behaviour towards his ward than any other reason), yet she determined not to pass the present opportunity of using some exertion in behalf of her young friend. In the arguments she urged to convince him of his cruelty in forcing Caroline's inclinations by the proposed alliance, he thought he could perceive certain indirect allusions to the discomforts of her own situation. Julia was warm and animated with the task she had undertaken, while Osmond's silent attention to her observations induced her to hope they would prove successful. His silence, however, proceeded from very different causes; he was dissecting every sentence she uttered, to discover, if possible, from some unguarded expression, a clue to his future operations, and a guarantee for his security in attempting them.

There are circumstances under which the crafty and designing are sometimes suddenly entangled in their own toils.

Osmond, generally cool, collected, and wary, had his moments of weakness and misconception. The first few hints he threw out in this interview on Earlvin's jealousy, were so cautiously worded, and obscured in such opposite allusions, that their meaning remained undiscovered by Julia, while her answers increased his confidence, and encouraged him to hazard more explicit explanations.

"Believe me, my dear Mrs. Earlvin," he continued, under a full and perfect conviction of his security, "these observations apply to many, who are considered by the world as the most happy and enviable beings. How often do we see a lovely and virtuous woman rendered miserable by the unjust suspicions of a husband, whose want of confidence must be equally degrading and mortifying. Can the superficial attentions and politeness of such a man in public, make amends

for the anguish and domestic contentions that are occasioned by his jealousy.

Julia listened to these remarks with an astonishment which deprived her of the power of answering them. They seemed pointedly addressed to herself; yet the improbability that such a man as Mr. Osmond, the professed friend of her husband, and apparently an austere and tenacious observer of propriety, should either have the inclination or audacity to attempt such insinuations, was sufficient to render her irresolute as to the opinions she should form. From a fatality that seemed attached to Osmond's actions during this interview, he still construed her emotions into an encouragement to his proceedings. Although cold, and phlegmatic, his supposed success excited in him a degree of warmth and exultation which materially tended to oppose his usual prudence, and deprive him of those powers of duplicity he generally possessed.

"I am sure you will pardon me," he exclaimed, while his voice fell into an under-tone,

and he drew his chair still nearer to the astonished Julia, "I am confident you will pardon me, if I confess to you, my dear madam, the admiration *your* conduct excites in those, who are aware of the sufferings which this unfortunate passion inflicts on the innocent objects of its alarm. Mr. Earlvin is my friend. By heavens! I respect him more than any man upon earth; but can I be insensible to his folly, nay, I would almost say cruelty, in his unwarrantable suspicions of one, who, with personal accomplishments sufficient to call forth the admiration of the whole town, has still pursued a line of conduct that should long since have annihilated his apprehensions? Believe me, you give way too much to his idle and whimsical humours; by so anxiously studying *his* happiness, you sacrifice *your own*. His disease is not incurable; nay, the remedy is within your power. Submit not to the degrading and mortifying restrictions he imposes upon you: exert yourself to recover that independence which will maintain your own rights, and moderate his expectations of obedience.

Consider, my dear Mrs. Earlvin," he continued, while he suddenly seized her hand, and his countenance became flushed with the guilty passion he was no longer able to conceal, " consider, I say, the attributes you possess to emancipate yourself from this cruel tyranny."

" Hold, sir!" interrupted Julia, while she disengaged herself from his grasp, and rose from her seat with a dignity that awed and confounded him; " I have thus long allowed you to proceed without evincing those symptoms of abhorrence your discourse was calculated to call forth, because I will candidly confess the development of your character has been managed with sufficient art to render me doubtful of your motives, till you dared to explain them by insult."

Osmond, astonished and dismayed, declared he neither intended to offend nor alarm her: he requested she would resume her seat, and he would explain every thing to her satisfaction.

" To wait for explanation," replied Mrs. Earlvin, " after what I have just heard, would be an encouragement for farther offence."

She proceeded towards the bell, but he still detained her.

" Nay, you shall hear me," he cried, with a vehemence which shook the temporary courage Julia had endeavoured to maintain; " you must not leave me with these impressions."

" It is impossible, sir," replied Mrs. Earlvin, " that any thing you have to say, can alter the opinions your conduct has so fully warranted me to adopt. I must insist upon ordering my servants, and leaving your house immediately."

" Not," answered Osmond, while he closed the door with violence, " till I have made you sensible, proud woman, that I am not without the power of retaliation for these prudish airs of affected modesty. Were they acquired from

the precepts of the libertine who called himself your father? Are you aware, that neither your origin nor education were of a description to entitle you to assume them, or even to gain you sufficient credit to deceive the world by an appearance of their sincerity? Has this delicacy, this fastidiousness, always characterised your actions? Is your husband possessed of your *entire confidence?* Have you *no secrets* which you conceal from him with trembling anxiety? Has *no visitor* been admitted to your presence within these last few months without his knowledge, and under a dread of his discovery? You can no longer be ignorant, lady, that your security depends upon your discretion."

It was evident that these threats had very powerful effects upon Mrs. Earlvin. Her agitation and astonishment were extreme as she listened to them, but her reply was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Mr. Onslow, who, observing her terror and distress, offered his arm for her support. Her desire to escape from Osmond

rendered any aid acceptable; and, scarcely sensible of her actions, she allowed him to conduct her to her carriage, into which he immediately followed her, and, seating himself by her side, directed the coachman to drive round the park on his way home. This order reminded her of the impropriety of the manner in which she had left the house, and she urgently requested Mr. Onslow would desire the man to return, as she wished to speak to Miss Almond on some points that had escaped her memory during the time she was with her.

"My dear madam," replied Onslow, "Miss Almond has left home on her morning walk."

Julia was convinced of the contrary, yet was fearful of enforcing her request, lest her alarm, and the cause of it, should be rendered still more public. She therefore complained of indisposition, and begged he would countermand the orders he had given to the servants to drive through the park.

Nothing, he replied, would be more likely to recover her.

"You will, I am sure," he continued, with a smile of the most provoking assurance, "allow me to accompany you. How is it possible I could answer to Mr. Earlvin for not delivering you safe to his protection?"

To have insisted on his leaving the carriage, or to have made any particular objections to passing through the park, would have implied an anxiety in her conduct towards him, calculated to inflate his vanity with the most false and absurd notions. She therefore made no farther attempt to contradict the orders the coachman had received, but endeavoured to appear as composed as the state of her mind would admit.

Osmond remained some time after her departure, musing on the events of the morning, and the consequences that would probably result from them. He was perfectly convinced of the

imprudence into which he had been led, from his erroneous opinions upon Mrs. Earlvin's behaviour during the first part of their interview. His vexation and disappointment were extreme: he had every reason to suppose, that a discovery of what had passed to her husband, would involve him in a duel, and produce a public disclosure of his conduct. Sudden resolutions or desperate plans were not often adopted by him; his proceedings were marked by slow and sure advances, and characterised rather by hesitation and caution, than promptitude or danger. The perseverance and industry he evinced in his pursuits, were of a nature to procure success; and his passions, though often violent, were yet generally subservient to his judgement. Under his present circumstances, however, Osmond perceived his usual mode of conduct must give way to more vigorous arrangements. He had no alternative: to remain inactive, would be tamely to submit to what he most dreaded. Scarcely had he made up his mind on these points, when Earlvin suddenly entered the room. His appearance indicated

considerable agitation. He had been wandering through the neighbouring streets for a considerable time, endeavouring to form some resolutions on the extraordinary information he had received from Parrot; and, although he became sufficiently composed to reflect on the improbabilities of the intelligence, yet the facts he had himself witnessed seemed, in part, connected with it. He recollected, that Mrs. Earlvin might probably have left home on a visit to Caroline Almond, in consequence of the message he had delivered: he resolved, therefore, to seek her at Mr. Osmond's, and, if possible, procure some relief to the tortures he experienced, by demanding from her a prompt and explicit explanation. Mr. Osmond's house was situated close to the park: Earlvin was near one of the entrances, when his own carriage suddenly passed him, and he plainly perceived his wife and Onslow seated within it. His feelings, at this moment, are not to be described: he remained for some moments irresolute, and almost motionless, while his eyes traced the chariot beyond that part through which it

should have proceeded in its nearest way home. One instant he determined to follow her, the next, he resolved to abandon her for ever. Under this state of mind he arrived at Osmond's door, and inquired of the servants if Mrs. Earlvin had called in the course of the morning. He was answered in the affirmative, and that she had just left the house in company with Mr. Onslow. Distracted with this apparent confirmation of his suspicions, he demanded to see Mr. Osmond, and was immediately conducted to his library. Osmond had sufficiently recovered himself to receive him with his usual composure, while his thoughts were busily employed on the means he should adopt to turn this visit to his advantage. Earlvin's feelings were in that state which rendered it impossible for him to conceal them. His pride had hitherto urged him to refrain from confessing alarms he was conscious had so often been excited without any just cause. The last few events, however, followed so rapidly upon each other, that reflection had neither calmed his

sufferings nor called forth his judgement. It required but little exertion on the part of Osmond to draw from him the cause of his uneasiness. This explanation, though at first given with hesitation, very soon produced a full confession of his suspicions, and an unlimited confidence as to the causes for them. Osmond listened to him with a degree of affected surprise and concern that perfectly succeeded in deceiving his unhappy visitor with the most false and dangerous notions of his friendship: and, while he artfully pretended to soothe him with an eulogy on his wife's character, he, at intervals, contrived to insinuate, that the most virtuous were exposed to much danger and temptation.

"Onslow," he continued, "unfortunately possesses all the attributes for success in those vicious pursuits, which young men of the present day consider as fashionable and meritorious. I must candidly confess, I tremble for Caroline's happiness, and am almost inclined to acquiesce

with Mrs. Earlvin's wishes, and break off their intended union, although it is so nearly concluded."

"Has Julia expressed such wishes?" interrupted Felix, with increased alarm and astonishment. "Is it possible that she so openly takes an interest in this man's affairs, as to use exertions to prevent his marriage with your ward?"

Osmond artfully pretended to be grieved for what he had said, while he faintly attempted to account for Mrs. Earlvin's motives in her regard for Caroline. These attempts produced exactly the effects he had calculated upon: they strengthened Earlvin's suspicions, and increased his distress. He seized Osmond's hand in agony, while he threatened the most exemplary vengeance on the objects of his passion.

"May I be allowed," said Osmond, assuming an air of candour and friendship, "to give

you my advice on this delicate and distressing business? Be not, my dear friend, too hastily led away by a train of circumstances and appearances, which, however they may seem to confirm these alarming suspicions, are yet certainly no direct proof of them. I must confess the tale you have heard from Parrot seems strangely connected with circumstances you witnessed yourself about the same time, but it is not sufficient to demand your entire confidence on assertions so vague and extraordinary. Still I am sorry, very sorry, to declare, that if the accuracy of the whole of Parrot's narrative is to be estimated by the correctness of a part of it, your uneasiness is not excited from slight causes: his intelligence, as far as relates to the history of Onslow and his mother, is most certainly true; but what motives that young man could have in his visit to Mrs. Earlvin immediately on his arrival in England, or how he could have been admitted in the way described, when, on every reasonable conjecture, we must suppose him to have been an entire stranger

to her, is a mystery that certainly requires explanation."

"I have not overlooked these points," replied Earlvin; "her father, Captain Roseville, was, during the early part of his life, stationed in the West Indies; he had certainly connexions in those parts even after my acquaintance with his daughter. Are you positive Mr. Onslow has never been in England before?"

Osmond assumed an appearance of alarm at this question; he paused, as if doubtful of the answer he should make.

"Not to my knowledge," he replied; "his patron, Mr. Wellsford, was my intimate friend; if any such event had taken place, why should it have been concealed from me? Yet I recollect," he continued, while he again paused, as if exerting his memory on the subject, "Mr. Wellsford a few years ago had some confidential concerns to settle in England when I for two or three months

was absent from it. But even, in that case, why should he now pretend that this is his first visit?"

"He may have powerful reasons for such a mode of conduct," answered Felix; "we know not how far his actions, during such an excursion, might at this time warrant a confession of it."

Osmond appeared forcibly struck with this observation, and was again silent. After some time, he suddenly exclaimed; "A thought has at this moment occurred to me which may perhaps be serviceable to us. Onslow's mother is not entirely unknown to me; from her much information may be procured. I will see her immediately, and you shall know the result in a few hours."

Earlvin gladly accepted this offer, and promised to remain at home for his return. Osmond's principal aim was, for the present, to prevent an interview taking place between Julia and

her husband, which he was aware might produce explanations that would at once discover his perfidy, and bring upon him the vengeance of Earlvin. He therefore proposed that Felix should wait for him at a tavern in the neighbourhood, observing, that it would not be policy for him to return to his own house till he had received more decided and accurate information as to his wife's conduct. Felix immediately acquiesced in this arrangement, and took his leave, under emotions more violent and agonising than he had ever before experienced; while Osmond exultingly proceeded with those plans he had already commenced with such apparent success.

CHAPTER IX.

NARRATIONS OF THE PAST, AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE.

JEALOUSY, like the other passions of the human mind, is often diversified with many different shades. The variations it assumes are produced from certain marked and prominent features of character, to be discovered in those who are subject to its influence. The open-hearted, and the benevolent, are not invulnerable to this passion, which is so generally observed in the vindictive and the cruel. But the feelings it excites, and the actions they produce, are of a very different nature and complexion. Trembling anxiety for the preservation of that we dearly love, will call forth

alarms and suspicions of deprivation, which an object of less interest and value would never create. Yet similar sensations may be generated from a strong susceptibility to the shame or degradation of being supplanted in the affections of one, from whom a separation in any other way would occasion neither sorrow nor regret. Dread of contempt or ridicule; a pride of superiority; a tenacity of insult, or an enthusiastic affection, with many other causes, in their nature the most opposite, are each capable, under certain circumstances, of producing one general effect, which we denominate jealousy. The actions of an individual under the influence of this fatal delirium, are the only means we possess of forming even a conjecture on its source, or of estimating those peculiar traits of character that are sometimes developed by powerful emotions. And even these means gradually decrease as the paroxysms become stronger; till at a certain height they totally fail, and nothing is to be distinguished but acts of ferocious barbarity. It has been already related, that Felix Earlvin retired to the country

immediately on his marriage: a more fortunate arrangement for the security of his happiness could not have taken place; he escaped, at once, from those scenes that were likely to animate the dormant seeds of a passion which from peculiar circumstances, he had imbibed in very early life. Still under a situation thus favourable to his felicity, there were moments when, in certain degrees, it was excited, but from causes so insignificant, that the effects were merely transient, and a few hours were sufficient to restore him to his usual serenity and good humour. During these intervals, there was no difficulty in tracing his affection for the object that created his alarm. An anxiety to soothe the uneasiness, which an abrupt or unkind sentence from him would sometimes occasion her, almost instantaneously followed the impulse that urged him to utter it. An hour's reflection would convince him of his injustice, and call forth his contrition. The general tenderness of his behaviour towards his wife, and his love for his children, were obscured but for an instant; a smile, a tear, or an embrace from ei-

ther of them, were capable of chasing the fiend from his bosom, and calling him to a sense of his happiness. Such were the general terminations of the slight effects he experienced during his retirement; and although they, at intervals, cast a shade over the more amiable parts of his character, yet they were never sufficiently powerful to obscure them.

His removal to London, unfortunately, placed him in situations most dangerous to the repose and tranquillity of a jealous husband. The events that now occurred, were of a very different description to those which had hitherto affected him. They followed close upon each other; they seemed in some points connected, and required explanations of her, from whom, of all others, he most dreaded to demand them.

Osmond having accomplished one of his principal points of attainment, by preventing an interview taking place between Earlvin and his wife for some hours, began to consider how he should make the best use of this interval. That the

reader may be enabled to appreciate the policy of his proceedings, it is requisite he should be made acquainted with the circumstances which formed a ground-work for them.

The information conveyed to Earlvin by the industry of Parrot, relative to Onslow and his mother, was, as Osmond affirmed to the former, generally correct. Mrs. Lorimer, a woman of strong mind, but licentious principles, was discovered by her son on his arrival in England from the West Indies, under the most disgraceful circumstances. This young man had been nominated by his late benefactor as executor to his will, in conjunction with Mr. Osmond, without whose advice and approbation (by a peculiar clause in the instrument), he was unable to act. It therefore became absolutely necessary, that, as soon as certain arrangements would allow him to leave Jamaica, he should join the person whose concurrence was to be procured on every point relative to the affairs of the deceased. Young Onslow was somewhat surprised at such extraor-

dinary powers being invested in a man with whose name he was even unacquainted. On his arrival in England, however, and during his first interview with Osmond, he was made acquainted with circumstances that explained the mystery. He was likewise informed of particulars relating to his own family and affairs, which the reserve and delicacy of his patron had cautiously concealed from him. Osmond was the brother of Mr. Wellsford's second wife; he quitted Jamaica when a young man, and Mr. Wellsford committed to his care his infant daughter, who died a few months after her arrival in England. A principal part of the fortune of the deceased was bequeathed to Onslow under the stipulation of a limited time to discover the legal heiress to his possessions, a daughter by his first wife; and provided such claims were made good, he was only entitled to five thousand pounds, and an annuity of five hundred. Mr. Osmond and Mrs. Lorimer were also subject to a deprivation of large legacies by the same clause; but as the means to be adopted for discovering the heiress

were left entirely to the discretion of the executors, and as the time allowed was only eighteen months from the funeral of the deceased (six of which had elapsed on Onslow's arrival in England), there was but little probability of their interests being affected by such an event. Mrs. Lorimer was made acquainted with the property bequeathed to her, and the peculiar conditions attached to the legacy, by a letter from her son, that came to her hands only a few days before his arrival at Bristol. She was at this period little better than a wandering pauper; the annuity Mr. Wellsford had regularly allowed her, was generally dissipated a few weeks after she received it. Onslow waited some days at Bristol, under the anxious expectation of meeting his mother, agreeably to the arrangements he had formed for that purpose, and communicated to her in his letter. The delay, however, that occurred in the delivery of it, owing to Mrs. Lorimer's unsettled mode of life, prevented her arriving at Bristol till two days after her son had quitted that city. In a packet which he left for her at

the post-office, he explained his reasons for leaving Bristol so abruptly, and named an inn in the town of Monmouth, where he requested she would follow him. Onslow, immediately on his arrival there, had an interview with Mr. Osmond; the business in which they were jointly concerned was commenced, and continued in several other meetings that followed. During these interviews, the latter had various opportunities for studying the character of his young associate; and the opinions he formed, served, in a great measure, to regulate his future conduct. He discovered in him some very prominent and opposite traits of character. He was open, and liberal; ardent in his pursuits, and warm in his attachments: but he was a voluptuary in those pleasures that lead to the most dangerous excesses, and sensitive only to the happiness of others when it did not interfere with his own. Through the mistaken indulgence of Mr. Wellsford, he had enjoyed, from his earliest years, an unbounded freedom in his inclinations, which, in

his progress towards manhood, rendered him impatient of control, and produced a remarkable obstinacy in the attainment of his wishes. He could feel acutely, and be generous even to profusion; but where self-gratification interfered with his virtues, they were no longer to be preserved, and the best parts of his character became obscured.

One of the first points that claimed their attention in the business which brought them together, was the clause that excluded their principal claims on the estate of the deceased, in favour of an unknown heiress. In their very first conversation on this part of Mr. Wellsford's will, Onslow observed, he had a circumstance to communicate, which might probably lead to the discovery of the child for whom their departed friend had so liberally provided.

Osmond, although well disciplined in the art of finesse, was incapable of concealing his emo-

tions as he listened to this introductory remark; he however remained silent, and made every exertion to resume his composure.

" It was but a few weeks before our friend's death," said Onslow, " as I was one evening reading under a viranda that shaded the entrance of his pavilion, a pale, feeble, and emaciated figure suddenly stood before me. He seemed to walk with difficulty; and, having seated himself on a stone step close to my feet, he requested a draught of water from a spring he perceived within the palisades of the garden. I immediately ordered a servant to take him a pitcher of the water, but, before he arrived with it, the man had fainted. After a short interval he recovered, and was conveyed into a chamber on the ground-floor of the building. The physician who attended Mr. Wellsford was in the house; I requested he would give me his opinion of the stranger, and was much surprised at the serious apprehensions he entertained for his life. It now became necessary that some inquiries should be made of him

as to the place of his residence, that he might be conveyed to it with as little delay as possible. In his replies, there was an alarm and embarrassment which created some suspicion of his character, and I determined that he should be immediately removed. While giving my directions for this purpose, I chanced to utter the name of Mr. Wellsford; the stranger became instantly agitated in a very uncommon degree, and desired that he might speak to the gentleman I had mentioned. This request was, of course, refused; and, after some hesitation, he begged I would allow him the liberty of saying a few words to me in private. I ordered the servant to leave the apartment, when, taking a packet of papers from his pocket, he informed me his name was Felton; that, in the early part of his life, he had entered into a militia regiment, which had volunteered its services on the continent. That on his return to his native country he obtained his discharge, and, shortly after, engaged himself as a servant to a man of the name of Roseville, who had held a commission in a West India regiment

recently disbanded. Captain Roseville was considered as a person of desperate fortune; he appeared to have no family, frequented the most notorious gambling-houses, and was continually changing his lodging to escape his creditors. Under these circumstances, the morals of the servant were very soon reduced to a level with those of his master. He enjoyed the same pleasures, fell into the same vices, and was very shortly harassed with similar embarrassments. His resources, however, were not so various, and his affairs became desperate; when one night, having received in trust a portmanteau of Captain Roseville's, for the purpose of removing it to more convenient apartments, he was tempted, by means of a key in his possession, to examine the inside. The captain had been enabled, from a run of good fortune the night before, to place in this repository a very considerable sum of money, and the servant not being capable of withstanding so powerful a temptation, to supply his necessities, suddenly decamped with its contents, and, having joined some smugglers with whom he had former-

ly been connected, escaped to Calais in less than four and twenty hours. The property he had stolen, was, in a few months, dissipated in the most licentious and abandoned societies of Paris, when, again urged by the terrors of punishment, he fled to Naples, and continued for some years a series of depredations equally infamous and notorious. In the portmanteau he had stolen from Captain Roseville, were several articles besides the money that had urged him to the theft; the principal part of them, from motives of policy, he destroyed; but among those he preserved, were a packet of letters, the contents of which he did not examine. After various sufferings and hardships, he was reduced to a sense of his errors, and resolved, for the future, to procure a subsistence by those means of honest industry, that were still within his power. He worked his passage home to his native country on board of an English ship, the captain of which recommended him to a service in London. The effects of an irregular life, however, became every day more perceptible in his constitution, and the pangs of bodily disease in-

creased the sensations of anguish his reflections on his past vices always called forth. He made inquiries after his former master, Captain Roseville, and understood he was no more. This intelligence seemed to add to his remorse, and his mind became harassed with the most gloomy anticipations of the future. His appetite failed him, and his sleepless nights were passed in reveries which augmented his despair. He now, for the first time, read over the papers he so unwarrantably possessed. They were a series of letters between the late Captain Roseville and the wife of a West India planter, who had eloped with him from Jamaica, and who had died a few months after their arrival in England. These letters were looked upon by Felton as awful memorials of his former crimes. He gazed upon them for hours together in silent agony, while he regretted that it was now impossible to restore them to him who had been so unjustly deprived of them. Under this state of mind, he was suddenly called upon to attend his master to the island of St. Domingo. The latter died during

the voyage, and Felton received the small sum that was due to him for wages, from the captain of the vessel, who was the intimate friend and executor of the deceased. He was also informed he might either proceed to St. Domingo, or land at Jamaica, where there was a greater probability of his meeting with a ship bound to England. This proposal immediately called to his mind the name of the planter whose wife had eloped with Roseville, and who was an inhabitant of Jamaica. He considered, that if he was still living, and a resident in the same island, the letters might now be placed in his hands. The idea was perhaps wild and fanciful, but his wretchedness was only to be relieved by hopes of atonement for his past vices, however trivial and uncertain. He had no sooner landed at Jamaica than he was seized with a fever which confined him for two months; the physician who attended him gave no hopes of his recovery, and even pronounced this opinion at a time when he had acquired sufficient strength to leave his bed and walk without assistance. Still the project he had

formed of restoring the letters he possessed, occupied all his thoughts. The hopes of accomplishing this end, had aided him to support the pangs of bodily disease, and soothed him in moments of agony, when he was insensible to other consolation. The name of our friend was so well known, that his first inquiries were satisfactory, even in an obscure part of the island. Mr. Wellsford was the planter whose wife had been seduced by Roseville, and, towards his residence, the weak and debilitated Felton began his journey. He had a distance of many miles to travel, but his anxiety to fulfil what he considered as the last moral duty he was capable of performing, seemed to inspire him with the strength and vigour it required. After several weeks of painful exertion, he sunk exhausted with fatigue and sickness before the door of the house, where he had so long and so ardently wished to arrive. Overcome with the recital of these particulars, which occupied a considerable time, from the difficulty he experienced in relating them, he again fainted, and, on his recovery, earnestly requested

to be immediately conducted to Mr. Wellsford. Our friend's situation precluded all visitors; but I promised an interview the moment the physicians should consider him capable of sustaining one. With this assurance he appeared satisfied, and resigned the papers to my care. I ordered a room to be prepared for him in the house, and requested one of the medical attendants to visit him the next morning. The precaution, however, was useless, for he died in less than three hours after I quitted him. I related to the physicians the charge which was intrusted to me from the dying Felton, but they earnestly desired it might not be communicated to their patient. Mr. Wellsford never sufficiently recovered to be spoken to on the subject; and expired in the course of a fortnight after the event."

"These letters," continued Onslow, "I have carefully perused. They appear chiefly to consist of a correspondence between Mrs. Wellsford and Captain Roseville a few months after their arrival in England, when the former

was resident on the sea-coast for her health, and the latter engaged on some speculative concerns in London. I have now, my dear sir, only to deliver them to your care; and, from the confidential intimacy that subsisted between you and our late friend, it is not improbable, but their contents may enable you to make some discoveries relative to the person he has named as the heiress to his fortune."

Osmond, who had listened to this narrative with an anxiety he could not entirely conceal, promised that he would give them a careful perusal; and warmly declared, that no exertions on his part should be wanted to fulfil the wishes of his much regretted friend.

The following morning, he requested an interview with Onslow at an early hour.

"Your anticipations of yesterday, my good sir, were perfectly correct," he exclaimed, as the visitor entered his study. The papers you left

with me last night were of too interesting a nature not to claim my immediate attention. I carefully read them before I retired to rest. Indeed I had a confused recollection of the name of Roseville, even at the moment you mentioned it, but I now perfectly remember a man with that appellation, who, I have very little doubt, was the person alluded to in these letters. Mr. Wellsford was unknown to me at the period of his first wife's elopement, and, during our subsequent intimacy, he never entered into any particulars of that event. Some few years after my arrival in England from Jamaica, Captain Roseville was well known in London, as a dissipated fashionable character; and was still more notorious, by possessing a very handsome daughter, whom he educated with a degree of care and propriety somewhat remarkable for one so careless of his own reputation. The beauty and amiable qualities of this young lady surmounted the disadvantages of her family connexion, and, in a short time after the death of her father, she married a gentleman of very large fortune and respectable

character. He has considerable estates in the county of Monmouthshire, and is, indeed, during a great part of the year, a resident in this neighbourhood."

"These are most fortunate circumstances," exclaimed Onslow: "the lady's information respecting the affairs of her late father, may be of infinite service to us."

"It is on that subject I wished to consult with you," replied Osmond, "and I must now, sir, claim your attention for a few minutes to some observations it is necessary I should impart to you. Mr. Earlvin, the husband of the lady of whom we have been speaking, is well known to me. Since his settlement in this county, we have been on terms of intimacy and friendship, which has, of course, afforded me various opportunities of estimating his character. He is a man of the most strict honour and liberal principles; but there are some few singularities in his disposition,

which aim at his happiness, and cast a shade over his virtues. He is, unfortunately, of a jealous and suspicious temper; tremblingly alive to feelings which agonise him with apprehensions of disgrace, and destroy the enjoyment of present happiness, by the anticipation of future evil. You will easily conceive the anxiety of such a man for the actions of those who are so far connected with him, as to involve his reputation in the errors or vices they may commit. Although he must, in some degree, have been acquainted with the character of Roseville, yet I am doubtful whether his knowledge of it extended to a full conviction of his villany. It is probable the circumstances we have discovered, from the possession of these letters, are entirely unknown to him; and, I must confess, that, in my opinion, the communication can effect no good purpose, but may be the means of creating some uneasiness between him and Mrs. Earlvin. At all events, it would, I conceive, be most prudent to have a conference with that lady on the subject, be-

fore we convey a series of anecdotes to her husband, which can now in no way concern him, but by casting an odium on the parent of his wife."

Onslow perfectly acquiesced in the propriety of these remarks, and Osmond proceeded :—

" I must acknowledge, under the circumstances in which I stand with the family, it would be more grateful to my feelings could I manage to keep clear of any personal interference in this affair. It would be no difficult matter, my young friend, for you to procure a private interview with Mrs. Earlvin during one of her husband's evening walks ; you can merely relate to her the substance of the letters you possess, and put those necessary questions as to the child of our late friend, which we are bound to ask, though there is not the least probability of her being able to answer them."

Onslow readily consented to take this part of the business upon himself, and immediately dispatched a note to Mrs. Earlvin, entreating a few minutes' private conversation with her, at any time she might choose to appoint.

It is likely that she would instantly have refused a request of this kind from one who was entirely unknown to her, had not the letter contained some hints as to the subject of the interview. Aware of those traits in her husband's character, which so materially interfered with their happiness, her alarms were excited by every event connected with the affairs of her late father, and likely to remind him of the disgrace attached to his character. Under the influence of these fears, she imprudently appointed an hour for the visit, when she knew her husband would be absent. The precautions taken by Onslow to escape the observation of Earlvin, rendered the appearance of the interview still more mysterious, and the uncertainty of con-

concealment, under such circumstances, was fully verified in the subsequent relation of the event by his servant.

Julia listened to Onslow's narrative concerning the letters he produced, with more regret than astonishment. She had little doubt but her father had been guilty of the errors their contents seemed to impute to him, not only from the painful remembrance of those parts of his conduct she had herself witnessed, but from various obscure hints she had formerly received of his amour in the West Indies. To the inquiries, however, relative to Mr. Wellsford's child, which formed the principal subject of Onslow's visit, she was unable to give any answer. The few unconnected anecdotes related to her in the early part of life, by those on whose authority little dependence could be placed, contained no mention of a child having accompanied the fugitives to England, nor was she acquainted with any circumstances that could warrant such a supposition.

Onslow, on receiving these assurances, politely apologised for the trouble he had occasioned, and immediately departed.

He had received, the same day, a note from his mother, acquainting him with her arrival in the neighbourhood. Having expended the few pounds she possessed in travelling to Bristol, Mrs. Lorimer was necessitated to perform the remaining part of her journey on foot, and was unable to procure those articles of dress that were actually requisite to render her appearance respectable. From these considerations, she was induced to write to her son, instead of proceeding immediately to the inn to which he had invited her, requesting he would meet her towards the close of the evening in a retired part of the suburbs, where she had concealed herself. The inclemency of the weather urged them to seek for shelter among the ruins, where Felix's curiosity was so greatly excited by observing them; and Onslow's relation of the interview which he had

just had with Mrs. Earlvin, occasioned her name to be repeated in the way already described.

Astonished and disgusted at the miserable appearance of his parent, he presented her with his purse, and earnestly entreated she would immediately depart for London. Mrs. Lorimer accepted the money, and promised to follow his directions. She evinced no feelings of tenderness towards her son during this meeting, nor expressed any anxiety, but for the benefits she conceived he had the power to bestow. Her life had been a continued scene of licentious depravity; she possessed a strong and vigorous mind, but, from the example of abandoned and profligate parents, it had been perverted in the early part of her existence. Neither the privations occasioned by poverty, nor the pains inflicted by disease, were capable of subduing her passions or reforming her conduct. Onslow had received from Osmond a distressing detail of her character, which their first meeting fully confirmed. In his arrangements for her immediate departure

to London, it is likely he was influenced by his fears of their consanguinity being discovered, yet, it is equally probable, that her *vices* were the principal cause of his anxiety on this point.

On the following day, he gave Mr. Osmond a faithful description of both the interviews in which he had been engaged the evening before; while in his account of that with Mrs. Earlvin, he mentioned his having left with her the letters of the late Captain Roseville, under a conviction, that she had now the best right to possess them. Osmond was unable to conceal his chagrin and disappointment at this intelligence; he intimated, that he should have been consulted on the propriety of such an act, and expressed a degree of alarm on the consequences that might result from it, which somewhat surprised his associate.

The meetings that had hitherto taken place between Onslow and Osmond, were conducted with as much privacy as the latter could possibly preserve, without hazarding offence to his colleague, who had certainly every reason to sup-

pose, that the business in which they were engaged, required neither secrecy nor concealment. He had, as yet, seen none of the domestics, but the one who conducted him in and out of the house; nor had Osmond, during their various conversations, ever mentioned that he had a young female under his guardianship. After the principal parts of their business were arranged, Onslow named the day he had fixed to proceed to London, when Mr. Osmond, for the first time, requested he would favour him with his company to dinner. They dined alone; but, either from chance or design, the guest was afterwards invited to walk round the pleasure-grounds, and conducted to a spot where Caroline was seated with a book, unconscious of their approach. Her confusion, on so suddenly perceiving a stranger, did not perhaps lessen her charms in the eyes of the West Indian, whose apology for his intrusion served as an introduction to farther conversation. Osmond, although in general extremely tenacious of his ward's appearance before the few persons by whom he was visited, on this occasion

desired she would prepare tea for them on their return. The extreme susceptibility of his visitor to female beauty was marked by him during this interview with peculiar satisfaction; every species of finesse within his power were put in practice, to improve those impressions he conceived she had already made upon his heart; and so well did they succeed, that the day after Onslow's departure from Monmouth, Osmond received his formal proposals for her hand. In his answer to this letter, he freely acknowledged the pleasure it gave him, while he intimated, that no doubt could be entertained of his ward's compliance to his wishes. He, however, requested Mr. Onslow would defer an explanation of his sentiments till their arrival in London, where he might expect them in a few days, for the express purpose of forwarding an alliance that received his most cordial approbation. In consequence of this arrangement, he suddenly required his ward to prepare for her departure, which he now considered more urgently necessary, from the accident which had introduced young Herbert to her notice.

His very great anxiety for her union with Onslow was generally considered to arise from his knowledge of the large fortune he was likely to possess. Osmond's conduct, however, towards his ward, had never evinced sufficient interest in her welfare to authorise an opinion that he was actuated by motives to promote her happiness or prosperity.

CHAPTER X.

THE DESPERATE PLANS OF A DESPERATE MAN.

Osmond, immediately after Earlvin's departure, dispatched a note to Onslow, requesting he would meet him at Mrs. Lorimer's lodgings on an affair of the most urgent importance. In the course of half an hour he proceeded himself to the appointed place, and, having delivered his name to a servant who answered the door, he was conducted to an apartment on the first floor, and requested to be seated for a few minutes, when the lady for whom he inquired would be ready to see him. The condition of the house and furniture indicated the description of person to whom he

was about to introduce himself. There was an appearance of wasteful extravagance and slovenly neglect in every article. No part seemed to have been cleared or cleaned since the last night's supper. A large table was placed in the middle of the room covered with bottles, and glasses half-filled with several kinds of liquor; and fruit and broken biscuits were scattered over it in various directions. The window-shutters were nearly closed, and the sashes so covered with dust, that the light was obscured in those parts which were open to receive it. Osmond waited a considerable time before Mrs. Lorimer entered the apartment. She was wrapped up in a half-dirty muslin morning-dress, with her hair in disorder, and her cheeks rouged. She possessed neither the attributes of youth nor beauty to lessen the aversion her character excited. There were, however, at times, a degree of expression in her face, that indicated the remains of a strong mind; her step was still firm, and her voice masculine. The effects of a dissolute life (as exhibited in the person and manners of Mrs. Lorimer), were calculated to en-

courage virtue, by exciting a disgust for vice. The influence of such an example is perhaps increased, by a want of that familiarity with its appearance, which detracts from the force of first impressions. It is in some degree soothing to humanity, that old age is not often unaccompanied by feelings and reflections creditable to its state, and best suited to its happiness. However seduced in the early part of existence, into errors and vices that bring with them their own punishment, there is an epoch when decay and infirmity produce conviction of past guilt, and create thoughts on the future. A deviation from such results becomes more awful to the spectator, under a consideration of its variance with the effects usually presented to him.

Osmond had studied the character of the person with whom he was now about to engage as a colleague; and his discernment enabled him to open the business of his visit in a manner most likely to answer his purposes. Nothing would have urged him to have admitted this woman to

his confidence, but the dangerous situation in which he was placed by the rash and premature discovery of his passion to Mrs. Earlvin. He well knew that the fatal consequences of his imprudence could only be obviated by schemes and arrangements which required the assistance of others, and most materially endangered his own security.

To Mrs. Lorimer's inquiries relative to the business he had to communicate, he thus replied: "The subject, madam, is of an importance that admits of neither delay nor apology for the abrupt manner in which I am necessitated to introduce it. Your servant has no doubt acquainted you with my name; I believe it is not altogether unknown to you."

Mrs. Lorimer listened to this preface with astonishment, and Osmond proceeded:—

"You have already been informed, madam, from letters and personal interviews with your

son, of the very large legacy bequeathed to you (under certain stipulations) by the late Mr. Wellsford of Jamaica. I have been given to understand that a copy of the will was forwarded to you from the West Indies a few weeks after the death of the testator. You must, therefore, perfectly comprehend the precise terms on which the possession of this property depends, as well as the time limited for those discoveries which would deprive you of it."

"Perfectly," answered Mrs. Lorimer; "and the very short interval that now remains to the expiration of this time, reduces the chance of my claims almost to security."

"I regret," replied Osmond, "you have formed such opinions. I am sorry to state, that the purpose of my present visit is to prove they are fallacious."

"Sir," interrupted Mrs. Lorimer, "if you suppose, either from my sex, my age, or circum-

stances, that I am to be imposed upon by an assertion equally vague and ridiculous, you are grossly deceived. Under all the imaginary disadvantages you may attach to my situation, I am still capable of discovering imposition and maintaining my own rights."

"You will recollect, Mrs. Lorimer," answered Osmond, "that in this particular affair our interests are mutual, and our deprivations equal. The same circumstances which may prevent you from receiving ten thousand pounds, will deprive me of the like sum. Under these considerations, my veracity, I should conceive, cannot be suspected, any more than my inclination to oppose that part of Mr. Wellsford's will I have perhaps reason to consider as unjust."

Mrs. Lorimer seemed conciliated by these remarks, while her anxiety for farther explanation was still evident in her countenance.

"On my arrival in England, madam," con-

tinued Osmond, " from the West Indies, about eighteen years ago, I was accompanied by the infant daughter of my brother-in-law (the late Mr. Wellsford), who was ordered by her physicians to be removed to this country, but who survived only a few months after she landed in it. A short time after her decease, chance led me to the village in which Captain Roseville, the seducer of Mr. Wellsford's first wife, resided. We lodged for a considerable time under the same roof unknown to each other. His circumstances were embarrassed, and he was necessitated to conceal himself within the precincts of his humble abode. A female child, between three and four years old, lived with him in this retreat. I was afterwards informed that Mrs. Wellsford had died near the spot, and was considered by the few inhabitants of the place as his wife, while the child was generally looked upon as their daughter. My concerns detained me in that part of the country for some months; during which, Roseville laboured under extreme ill health, and was informed by the apothecary who

attended him, that no hopes could be given of his recovery. On receiving this intelligence, he desired to be left alone, that he might make some memorandums that were of the most important consequence. He afterwards requested that I would attend him in his chamber, and he presented to me the writing on which he had been employed. It contained a declaration that the child who resided with him was the daughter of a West India planter, whose wife he had seduced; and that it was his earnest wish the infant might be conveyed back to her parent with all possible expedition after his decease. This paper he formally attested before me and another person who resided in the neighbourhood. A few days after, his disorder assumed a more favourable turn, and, in the course of a fortnight, he was declared out of danger. Whether the fear of his conduct being made public, or his partiality towards the child, served to influence his actions after his recovery, it is impossible to ascertain; but it was evidently his wish to bury in

oblivion the confession he had so recently made. My promise, as you may suppose, was easily obtained on this point, but the other witness who had been intrusted with the instrument, which Roseville was most anxious to secure, was himself on a bed of sickness, and labouring under a state of delirium that precluded all kind of application on the subject. The subsequent removal of this person to a place of confinement for lunatics, gave Roseville an opportunity of making inquiries of those who were intrusted with his affairs. He was even permitted to search among his papers for the document he so ardently wished to possess, but was unable to discover it; he therefore considered that it must have been destroyed during the first paroxysms of his disease, and congratulated himself on the security chance had so happily effected for him. Having therefore, as far as was in his power, obtained my secrecy, Roseville removed into a distant county, where his adopted daughter received from him attentions and indulgences most likely to

secure her affections. I must acknowledge, that my circumstances, at this period, were such as urged me to look with some anxiety towards a succession to Mr. Wellsford's fortune. He appeared in a declining state of health, and I had strong reasons for supposing that he considered me as his heir, provided the child by his first wife remained undiscovered. Under these considerations I carefully maintained the silence that was imposed upon me by Roseville, without any suspicion on his part of the motives by which I was influenced. The adoption of your son by Mr. Wellsford reduced my expectations on his fortune; but the increase of my own property after a few years rendered the disappointment of little consequence. Yet I still wished to preserve the secret I possessed, and which, after the death of Roseville, seemed confined to my own bosom. I was well aware that a discovery could not be made, without its leading to those particular details that must have disclosed the time I had concealed it. I am still urged by the same reasons, and have lately received infor-

mation which has renewed my anxiety and alarm. I have been given to understand from one on whose authority I can depend, that the man who witnessed Roseville's confession, and to whose care the written declaration was intrusted, is still living, and has actually been making inquiries relative to the event in the very village where it took place."

Mrs. Lorimer's countenance strongly expressed the feelings this information excited. There were circumstances within her own knowledge that seemed to confirm the truth of Osmond's statement; but the most considerable proof of its accuracy was an apparent want of all motive for the invention of a tale in which his own interest seemed so materially affected.

"Are there no means," she exclaimed, "to frustrate the inquiries of this man? Can no plan be adopted to bribe or threaten him into silence?"

"We might have defied his inquiries," re-

plied Osmond, " but for the imprudence of your son, who has placed a packet of letters in Mrs. Earlvin's possession, that contain a correspondence between Roseville and her mother a short time after their arrival in England. These letters, though they contain no direct information on the points we so anxiously wish to conceal, yet are calculated to inflame her curiosity. A thousand excuses might have been formed by Mr. Onslow for preserving them in his own hands. Several of them are dated from the village to which I have alluded, and although Roseville resided in it under a feigned name, and quitted it without mentioning to any one the place of his future abode (where he immediately resumed his real appellation), yet various trifling incidents may now draw the attention of Mrs. Earlvin to this particular part, and ultimately lead to the most important results."

" A few weeks," observed Mrs. Lorimer, " only remain of the time which is limited by

Mr. Wellsford's will for the discovery of his daughter."

"True," replied Osmond; "but, under the circumstances I have just related, is it not probable, that within even so short a time Mrs. Earlvin or her husband may be induced to visit the very place where they would most likely discover the man who is alone capable of advocating their cause? And though he may not possess the attested paper to bear out his assertions, yet without this instrument his tale may gain sufficient credit to throw the property into a course of law proceedings, in which a considerable part would be expended, and the most vexatious delay take place."

"Any plans," exclaimed Mrs. Lorimer, "however violent or hazardous, would be preferable to a tame and passive submission to the chances that are against us. Your personal intimacy with Earlvin and his wife must

surely suggest some method adapted for our purpose."

"My mind," answered Osmond, "has been entirely directed to this point since I first received the intelligence of our danger. I must confess," he continued, after a pause of several minutes, "there are plans to be adopted which I think would insure us success, but they require the aid of Mr. Onslow in certain arrangements that might not perhaps exactly accord with his ideas of the subject."

"Name them," interrupted Mrs. Lorimer, "and leave to me the task of urging him to execute them."

"You have no doubt," replied Osmond, "been informed of those traits of jealousy and suspicion in the character of Mr. Earlvin, which are equally humiliating and oppressive to a young and beautiful woman. The restless uneasiness and capricious humours of a man under the in-

fluence of this passion, are calculated, not only to render the home of his wife a melancholy and disgusting abode, but are apt to excite feelings of wounded pride, which urge her to retaliate even at the expense of her honour and reputation. My long intimacy in Earlvin's family has given me an opportunity of tracing these effects through regular gradations, from their first commencement to the present period. During their residence in the country, the husband scrupulously avoided such society as he conceived likely to endanger his own happiness; and the wife was necessitated to submit to the rigour of his regulations, or pursue that line of conduct which would at once have rendered her infamous in the eyes of the neighbourhood, and probably have separated her from her family and home. On their arrival in London, each found themselves under very different circumstances. Earlvin was no longer capable of selecting his associates, and his wife had frequent opportunities of evincing a preference for those whom she most admired. I have observed her in various situations, and at moments

when she least suspected a spy upon her actions. The result of my discoveries is a perfect confirmation of her decided partiality towards Mr. Onslow. There is often, Mrs. Lorimer, a certain intermediate state between propriety and error, where the victim is, as it were, suspended between two contending powers, and it is easy to mark the effects that any trivial event would produce, and even to select the object in which the power of temptation is vested. Such symptoms have been so evidently manifested in Mrs. Earlvin's behaviour towards your son, that he must be far less susceptible to female charms than I have hitherto had reason to suppose, if he has not already discovered them. In short, madam, it is my firm and decided opinion, that the conquest is within his power, and that little exertion would be required to complete it. We cannot certainly suppose, that a woman, whose conduct has hitherto been considered as correct, will make those public advances towards a man she may admire that would be expected from a profligate. Her pride, her anxiety to preserve, in some de-

gree, her reputation, will restrain her from such imprudence, and she will publicly resent those freedoms, to which she will privately invite him. Could Mr. Onslow be prevailed upon to act with decision, could he be persuaded, by a bold and spirited manœuvre, to secure this wavering beauty for a time within his own power, he would have every opportunity of overwhelming her with those violent effusions of his passion, and desperate assertions of his incapability to resist it, that would at once gratify her vanity, and form some excuse for her surrender. You must be aware, Mrs. Lorimer, that an event of this description would be likely to interrupt any arrangements that may be going forward towards the discoveries we have so much reason to dread, while the means employed would be of a kind to annihilate every suspicion of their origin."

Mrs. Lorimer listened to these suggestions with much satisfaction. She undertook the task of urging her son to the exertions they required; and the methods she proposed to adopt for her

purpose were a sufficient proof of the accurate opinions she had formed upon his character.

" We must not," said she, " place this business before him in any other light than what is calculated to inflate his vanity, by convincing him of Mrs. Earlvin's decided partiality towards him: the principal points in which we are interested must be cautiously concealed."

After some farther conversation, it was settled, that Osmond should not wait the arrival of Onslow, who was every moment expected in consequence of the letter that had been forwarded to him. And it was also resolved, that the precise time for executing their plans should be finally determined by the circumstances a few hours would probably produce.

Osmond had no sooner taken leave of Mrs. Lorimer than he began to turn his mind towards those points on which it was now requisite he should act promptly and alone. The caution and

circumspection that generally characterised his actions would certainly have urged him, under any other dilemma, to have avoided a partner or confidant in his designs: a single deviation, however, from his usual coolness and foresight, had involved him in difficulties which revolutionised all his former principles of conduct, and called forth the most desperate modes of proceeding. The hauteur that pervaded his manners implied an intrepid independence, yet he was tenacious of preserving those appearances of propriety which increased his enjoyments, and secured him a respectable station in society. He was well aware of the consequences a disclosure of his conduct from Mrs. Earlvin to her husband would produce: he not only shrunk from the infamy it would attach to his name, but was equally alarmed at the individual resentment he might expect from his much-injured friend. In his arrangements with Mrs. Lorimer, he had taken as comprehensive a view of the difficulties that surrounded him as the time and circumstances would admit. Although the events he had related to her

were perfectly correct, and of a description to stimulate her to those exertions he most desired, yet, with himself, they were but secondary considerations in the plans he had formed. He cautiously concealed from her every particular that did not appear absolutely necessary for her to know: among these was his conduct towards Mrs. Earlvin, the ostensible but secret spring to all his actions. A mere deprivation of property, however mortifying to his avarice or disappointing to his hopes, would never have prompted him to those violent measures he was now about to adopt.

Earlvin, on separating with Osmond, proceeded towards the tavern where he had promised to wait the result of his inquiries. He laboured under emotions of mental agony, known only to those who have experienced the feelings that produce them. Although his thoughts were occupied on schemes of vengeance, they were incapable of excluding from his bosom many latent sensations of tenderness. Under this state of

mind he walked to the park, and threw himself on one of the benches which were unoccupied. He had remained in this situation but a few minutes, when he was accosted by one whose voice and person he instantly recollected: it was Seville the poor poet who had so greatly interested him at the inn where he had slept on his journey to London. His salutation was distant and respectful; Felix seized his hand with eagerness, while Seville beheld his agitation with alarm.

"You promised to call upon me," said Earlvin, "immediately you arrived in London. I flattered myself the appointment would not have escaped your memory."

"I only returned from the country at a late hour last night," replied Seville, "and I was now going to avail myself of your kind invitation."

"Is it possible," answered Felix, "that you have been wandering about the country during the

late gloomy and comfortless weather? Surely to those who are free from family ties and connexions, London must now appear the most desirable residence."

"Alas! my good sir," replied Seville, "it often happens that, for want of such ties and connexions, a miserable restlessness is produced, which renders every place equally irksome and uninteresting."

"The feelings that enable us to enjoy them," replied Earlvin, in a faltering voice, "are an honour to our nature."

"They are blessings," exclaimed the poet, "which illumine our existence with warm and cheering sunshine; they augment our happiness in prosperity, and soothe us under calamities that defy every other species of consolation."

"And yet," exclaimed Earlvin, while his

agitation visibly increased, "there are situations where their influence may be considered as a curse."

"Pardon me," replied Seville, "if I object to that position: the feelings implanted in our nature by a benign and all-powerful Being, as the sources of our purest felicity, can never, under *any circumstances*, be productive of effects so opposite to the general laws by which they are regulated."

"Have we not innumerable instances," said Earlvin, "where the mind is agonised even to madness, by a trembling sensibility to these feelings?"

"But would any man of reflection," replied Seville, "forfeit their possession, under an idea of escaping the poignant sensations which sometimes appear to result from them? Would he fly from the comforts of domestic life, resign

the joys of domestic society, because a deprivation of them, at a future period of his existence, might call forth sorrows their former possession could only have occasioned? Can the cold insensible apathy which the want of such affections produces, compensate for the warm and generous enthusiasm it destroys? Mark, but for an instant, the family-man, surrounded by the little group who are connected with him by the most fond and endearing ties to which human nature is susceptible; observe the tear of rapture that will steal from his eye as he impresses on their cheeks the kiss of paternal love; trace the expressions of happiness delineated in his countenance, as he fondly embraces the mother of his children: watch him through all his daily occupations; his labour is sweetened by thinking on those for whom he toils; his food may be humble, but his meals are social, while he is conscious of deriving his felicity from sources honourable to himself, and acceptable to his God."

"Sir! sir!" exclaimed Earlvin, with a vio-

lence of emotion that astonished his companion, " you have exhibited a glowing and fascinating picture of domestic happiness; but you have forgotten to observe, that your resemblances are, unfortunately, often reversed: you must be aware there are portraits equally striking to be drawn from domestic misery."

" In every situation of life," replied the poet, " mankind are subject to certain calamities that must be considered as the wise dispensations of the Providence who inflicts them. The loss of an adored wife or child, the deprivation of a beloved friend, may occasion us the most acute sensations of regret and agony; yet, even in these moments of anguish, there are soothing reflections to be derived from the very feelings which are considered as the sources of our sorrow. How various are the tender remembrances combined with our grief! how often is it calmed by the recollection of mutual attachment, and a consciousness of having relieved the pangs of those whom we loved, by fond and

endearing attentions! How often does the consolation administered by one affectionate child pour balm into the wounds inflicted by the loss of another! How often does the widowed parent, after following to the grave the beloved partner of his heart, receive from his flourishing offspring the support and comforts so requisite for his years and infirmities! Has the solitary unconnected man these chances for happiness or alleviations in misery? Is his youth illumined with such joys, or his age sustained by such blessings? Observe him, also, during the progressive states of existence:—in the morning of his life, surrounded by pleasures and amusements that have no tie or relation with his future prospects:—in middle age, incapable of being gratified with those pursuits which are only interesting in the gay and early part of it:—in the last stage—how well am I able to describe his feelings, his wants, and his sufferings!" continued Seville, while his voice trembled with emotion, and he anxiously attempted to conceal the tear that trickled down his faded cheek. "Gloomy and cheerless are his

days; his infirmities receive no aid but from those who give it for charity or reward; he has no wife, no child, perhaps no relative, or even friend, to render him those endearing attentions, which are never so ardently felt as in the hour of sickness. Alas! at such periods, how anxiously does he look for some being, on whose attachment he may rely for care and tenderness in moments when he is unable to assist himself! And, at that awful crisis, when expiring nature increases the pangs of bodily pain, when the sight becomes dim with the last efforts of existence, and every object gradually falls into the shadow of death, how consolatory, how desirable, would then be the presence of some beloved object, on whose bosom he might breathe his last sigh, and on whose features his eyes might close for ever!"

Seville was unable to proceed, while Earlvin gazed upon him with increased agitation and amazement.

"There are," said he, "other sources of

misery to which the family-man is subject, more poignant than those you have enumerated, and less capable of alleviation. He may be tortured by the ingratitude of those on whom he has fixed his affections; his love may be received with apathy, his attentions with contempt: he may be disgraced by the woman he adores; dishonoured by a false friend, and, perhaps, duped or tormented by any coxcomb who is inclined to interfere with his enjoyment or destroy his happiness."

"Such circumstances have no doubt occurred," answered Seville, "but, thank Heaven, they cannot be classed as very general events in domestic life. A dispassionate observer will discover, in cases of this kind, that they are frequently produced from causes in which the party most injured is not entirely free from censure. We often perceive a few infirmities of temper call forth a series of misfortunes, that could scarcely be expected but from the worst vices. There is indeed one passion of the human mind intimately

connected with those parts of our nature in which the Creator appears to have formed the principal sources of human felicity. How various, how horrible, are the effects of jealousy, when it suspects the object it loves, and agonises its victim by a continual alarm of injury, while justice and humanity demand implicit faith and confidence! How often does this passion produce the very evils it anticipates, and mar every blessing within the grasp of its unfortunate votary!"

Earlvin, incapable of supporting the feelings which these remarks excited, suddenly rose from his seat, and, taking the arm of his companion, changed the subject of their discourse, by requesting he would dine with him.

"I am, by appointment, to wait for a friend at a tavern near the Park," said he, "and you will oblige me, by partaking of the dinner I shall order there."

Seville, after some hesitation, accepted the invit-

ation, and they proceeded to the house. The waiter showed them into a private room, and Felix gave directions that Mr. Osmond should be conducted to him immediately he arrived. He carefully avoided a renewal of their conversation in the Park, and exerted himself to appear cheerful; but his spirits were visibly depressed, and, at times, he remained silent and dejected, without listening to the conversation of his companion, or even replying to the observations that were addressed to him. He drank much more than his usual quantity of wine, and, before Osmond arrived (which was not till near nine in the evening), he was in a slight state of intoxication. Seville would have withdrawn soon after their dinner, but Earlvin so urgently requested him to remain, and seemed so much in need of his company, that he was persuaded to comply. Osmond was astonished and chagrined when he discovered that Felix was not alone. The whole fabric of his schemes depended upon this interview, and a more unfortunate incident could not have occurred than

the intrusion of a third person at so critical a juncture.

Seville, on his entrance, again rose to take his leave, but Earlvin still detained him, and, calling for more wine, declared neither should depart till they had shared it between them. Osmond plainly perceived that he was sufficiently elevated with what he had already drank, to reflect but little and act rashly. He drew him aside, and whispered he had much to communicate that required they should be private. Earlvin, however, under those feelings of contradiction and obstinacy which are so generally perceptible in a drunken man, still declared that Seville should remain, but consented to withdraw with Osmond into another apartment. With this arrangement, the latter was reluctantly obliged to comply, and Seville was requested to wait their return.

Osmond informed him, that, agreeably to his promise in the morning, he had seen Mrs. Lori-

mer, and was now come to relate to him the particulars he had collected from her. In this detail, he fabricated many falsehoods, which he artfully interwove with some truths, and composed a narrative sufficiently plausible to inflame the passion of Earlvin to a degree of violence he had never before experienced.

" My suspicions are now confirmed," interrupted Earlvin; " his visit to my house immediately on his arrival in England, was under a degree of secrecy and concealment which guilt only could have rendered necessary. But every event that has since occurred tends to the same end; his familiarity with my wife, the very first evening of his introduction to her; his present of the masquerade-tickets, and evident disappointment at her absence from the entertainment; even this very morning, your house was made the place of their assignation, and I beheld them in my own carriage triumphantly and openly exulting in their infamy."

" I must confess," replied Osmond, " however unwilling I have hitherto been to form opinions injurious to Mrs. Earlvin's character, the circumstances that have lately occurred, stagger my faith in her purity, and urge me (Heaven knows how much against my inclination!) to declare, I am no longer capable of defending her."

" And yet, sir," answered Earlvin, while his cheek became flushed with anger, and his eyes darted upon Osmond expressions of resentment which in some degree alarmed and disconcerted him, " I did not expect *you* would so suddenly have become her accuser. The intelligence you have collected is certainly against her; but it is not impossible she may be capable of vindicating herself: the opportunity, you will recollect, has not yet been allowed."

" I have nothing more to say," replied Osmond, " but to remind you, my good friend, that

the exertions I have used in this affair were at *your* particular request. Your observation is certainly just, and I most heartily congratulate you on the cool and temperate manner in which you seem inclined to act. Philosophy, in these matters, has seldom been evinced, even by those who have displayed it under every other misfortune; but the rarity of the virtue renders it more commendable."

The artful insinuations couched in these words, not only contained an indirect reproach towards Earlvin for ingratitude, but gave a stimulus to his passion, by the very arguments apparently urged for his consolation. The idea of having become an object of pity and commiseration, was calculated to inflame and irritate his feelings, rather than to soothe or compose them. The extreme agitation under which he had laboured for the last few hours, increased the effects generally produced by inebriety: he was no longer able to conceal the agonising sensations that tortured him;

he declared he would immediately demand satisfaction of Onslow, and abandon his wife for ever. Osmond perceived, with exultation, that his passion had arrived at the paroxysm he had so ardently hoped to excite. He still, however, pretended to caution him against rash proceedings, while every sentence he uttered was calculated to drive him to desperation. Earlvin's violence increased in proportion to the means adopted for that purpose by his perfidious companion, till at length he wrote a challenge to Onslow, demanding a meeting at an early hour the following morning. Osmond agreed to accompany him, and proposed that Seville should be requested to leave the letter at Onslow's lodgings.

"He must not be trusted with the contents," said Earlvin; "this is a matter in which I should place little reliance on his secrecy."

"There is no necessity to make him a confidant in the business," replied Osmond, "nor

will any answer to the letter be required. Onslow will be sure to receive it time enough to keep the appointment."

He undertook to give the letter to Seville with the necessary instructions, and prevailed on Earlvin to allow him to depart, with an apology for not returning to him himself. Far from wishing that the subject of this letter should be concealed from the bearer, he was anxious that he should have some suspicions of the contents, under an idea that he would use means to prevent a meeting, which Osmond never intended to take place. On the delivery of it therefore to Seville, he contrived, by cautious and ambiguous instructions, to explain the business to which it related; and, without waiting for any reply, he wished him a good night, and returned to Earlvin, who was waiting for him in another apartment.

Seville's situation was now somewhat embarrassing; his anxiety to prevent the fatal effects likely to be produced from the letter with which

he was intrusted, urged him to fail in the delivery of it; but the idea of forfeiting his word, merely on apprehensions for which he had no positive grounds, caused him to hesitate on the conduct he should pursue. At length he determined to leave the letter, but take those precautions in the morning, that might preserve his friend from the consequences of a rash act, committed at a time when he was perhaps incapable of perceiving his error.

It was settled between Osmond and Earlvin that they should meet at the appointed place a few miles from London at six the following morning. Earlvin declared he would remain during the night at the tavern where he then was, without sending any information or message to his wife. This determination was approved by Osmond, who, after the settlement of a few more preliminaries, took his leave. He was acquainted with Onslow's engagements for the evening at a gambling-house in the neighbourhood, and was assured he would not return to his lodgings dur-

ing the night: he was therefore secure in his not receiving the challenge, even if Seville delivered it; and if he did not, the cause of Onslow's failure in the appointment might be attributed to the poet.

Osmond evinced his usual art and foresight in forming the plans with which he was so busily employed. He cautiously kept in view the probability of their failure, and anxiously guarded (as far as was in his power) against the consequences likely to fall upon himself. It was these motives prompted him to consult and share his confidence with Mrs. Lorimer, rather than with her son; for he well knew that, if his schemes were frustrated or discovered, he might attach any degree of criminality on the assertions of the former, and deny all that had passed between them. With Onslow he could not so easily have escaped, as his station in life gave an importance to his character which demanded attention and respect. Under these considerations, he intrusted to Mrs. Lorimer the task of deceiv-

ing her son with a belief of Mrs. Earlvin's attachment to him, as the most likely means of persuading him to adopt measures that would place her in his power. Onslow was a young man extremely liable to be duped by the arts of his abandoned parent; he was naturally dissipated, fond of intrigue, and vain of his influence among women. It was no difficult matter to make him believe, what he was always ready enough to anticipate, that a young and beautiful married woman preferred him to her husband; a conviction capable of urging him to actions, which, under other circumstances, he would have disclaimed with indignation. Mrs. Lorimer therefore accomplished her wishes with much less difficulty than had been calculated by Osmond, and the opportunity was only required to execute what they had already determined to perform.

Osmond, immediately he separated from Felix, repaired to the lodgings of Mrs. Lorimer, and proposed that Onslow should take advantage

of Earlvin's absence this night from his home, to secure his wife in the way they had already resolved.

" The affair," said he, " can be easily managed. Mr. Onslow may call at the house in a post-chaise at an early hour in the morning; Mrs. Earlvin's alarm will urge her to believe any tale he may choose to invent, in order to prevail upon her to accompany him; he will then have an opportunity, openly and forcibly to declare his passion for her, and be enabled to use those arguments, which every woman requires as an excuse for gratifying her inclinations."

A note was instantly dispatched to Onslow requesting his attendance, and Osmond, who wished to take no part in the interview, took his leave. He now began to reflect on the immediate effects and ultimate consequences to be expected from his exertions. The libertine opinions he entertained of the female sex in general, excited him to place strong hopes on the measures Onslow was

about to adopt. However mortified he might feel by the abhorrence and contempt with which Julia treated his own insidious attacks upon her honour, yet his vanity was necessitated to give way to the conviction, that neither his age nor person were favourable to his cause. The youth, figure, and manners of Onslow, were of a description calculated to forward his pretensions, however villainous or disgraceful; and he actually conceived, that the young man was not entirely indifferent to her. This supposed discovery was strengthened by his knowledge of Felix's jealousy, and the anxiety and uneasiness it occasioned. Osmond was too wary to rest his hopes entirely on the events he wished to take place; his plans were formed with a view, that provided they failed in those points for which they were immediately intended, they might yet produce effects that would be preferable to his remaining inactive. The alarm and confusion which Mrs. Earlvin's apparent elopement would occasion, he considered as the best means to obviate those consequences he had reason to apprehend

from her husband. The various doubts, suspicions, and ill-natured scandal, likely to fall upon Julia on the discovery of her absence from her home, would, he conceived, greatly invalidate any accusations she might think proper to bring against him, and even those who believed them, would be inclined to suppose that she had privately encouraged his advances. He might, on these grounds, form excuses for his conduct, both to her husband and to the world, that would in a great degree release him from the ignominy he so much dreaded to encounter. His anticipations of the future led him to remembrances of the past. Retrospection is punishment to the guilty. A review of former vices no longer connected with the temptations which excited them, produces a powerful and severe rebuke. Osmond, at this moment, felt pangs of contrition that often lead to reform. His wealth, and every enjoyment it could purchase, he would gladly have resigned for that quiet and repose which is only to be procured from the consciousness of a well-spent life. But

there was a sacrifice necessary to reformation, more dreadful in the eyes of Osmond than a deprivation of wealth, country, or even life itself. To become an object of pity and contempt to those, over whom he had hitherto maintained a vaunted superiority, was, to him, an evil of so horrible a nature, that the apprehension of it was sufficient to urge him to desperation. He was well aware of the precipice on which he stood; he had cast his last die: success was not impossible, but the chances were greatly against him. Although his observations on Onslow's character had confirmed to him the licentious opinions he entertained of women in general, yet it was doubtful whether he would be prevailed upon to commit an open and daring outrage on a female of an unimpeachable character and the most respectable connexions. And if he consented to the arrangements proposed to him, it was probable he might fail in his attempt, even of prevailing upon Mrs. Earlvin to quit her own house. Various circumstances might occur during the few hours which must elapse before such an at-

tempt could be made, to warn that lady of her danger, and expose the plans which were woven for her destruction. He had no tie on Mrs. Lorimer's faith or secrecy, but those connected with her own interests; and although, by intrusting her with his confidence, he had contrived to make her the acting partner in his schemes, there was little dependence to be placed either on her exertions or silence. These reflections were not of a nature to inspire confidence or calm apprehension, yet they produced those cautious resolves, which more favourable circumstances would never have suggested. He determined to forfeit his engagement with Earlvin, and quit London immediately. For this breach of promise, he considered an excuse might be fabricated when necessary; while a few hours would produce events to regulate his future arrangements. If his affairs became desperate, he resolved to leave England for ever, and endeavour, in a foreign country, to forget those occurrences which obliged him to abandon his own.

In this state of mind, Osmond arrived at his own house. It was near midnight; and the door was opened by his valet, who informed him that a person had been waiting for him some hours. Osmond was vexed and irritated by this information. "Why did not you inform him," said he, "my return was uncertain?"

The servant replied he had done so, but the gentleman declared his business was of an importance that rendered it absolutely necessary he should see him before he departed.

Osmond instantly proceeded to his study, where, to his astonishment, he beheld Doctor Sulfit comfortably seated by the fire-side in an easy chair, and apparently in a sound sleep.

"It is that cursed country apothecary!" he exclaimed; "order me post-horses immediately, and let this man remain here till he wakes; you may then say I have left London for Monmouthshire."

" He is already awake," answered the servant, as he quitted the room, while the doctor rose with some degree of confusion, and, with his usual formality, began to apologise for his situation.

" I must, however, beg leave to observe," he continued, " with all due respect and submission, that my business here is of that consequence, which rendered it absolutely requisite I should not leave the house without procuring an interview with its worthy master."

" Doctor," returned Osmond, with much petulance, " I must also observe, that whatever your business may be with me, it must be communicated immediately; I am in haste, and cannot listen to episodes and embellishments."

" I must be allowed to suggest," replied the doctor, " that the circumstances which have occasioned me the honour of this visit, require neither the one nor the other. I am deputed by my

very good and worthy friend Sir William Herbert (at whose particular request I have undertaken this journey), to make some inquiries after his son, who, he has been informed, suddenly left the university some days since."

"And why, sir," interrupted Osmond, with a degree of vexation and anger that elevated his voice and alarmed the doctor, "why are such inquiries directed to me?"

"Pardon me," answered Sulfit, "that was the very point I was just about to explain. Young Mr. Herbert is somewhat rash in his pursuits. You must no doubt have been informed of his partiality towards your ward. Indeed, we have good authority for saying, that he has absented himself from his college purposely to obtain an interview with her in London."

"Well, sir," again interrupted Osmond, with increased violence, "what is all this to me?"

" My good and worthy friend, Sir William," continued the doctor, " considered it by no means improbable, that, under these circumstances, you might have some knowledge of his son's residence in London. It was rather a delicate business to communicate by letter ; a confidential friend to both parties, he conceived, would be a preferable medium, and therefore he honoured me by the selection. It was impossible, you know, to refuse a request of this nature."

Osmond's patience was quite exhausted ; Sulfit's preamble evidently conveyed a suspicion on the part of Sir William, that his son's attachment to Caroline was in some degree countenanced by her guardian. He rang the bell with a violence which raised the doctor from his seat, and determined him to leave the house immediately.

" You shall see the lady herself, sir," he cried ; " I will take the trouble to convince you of

this impertinent error, that you may be the better enabled to express my contempt to your employer. Miss Almond shall even be called from her bed to confront so audacious an insinuation."

The servant informed him, that Miss Almond was not in the house.

"Not in the house!" he exclaimed; "impossible! how, and when, did she leave it?"

"She left home about an hour since," replied the servant, "immediately after her interview with that gentleman, and she desired me to say she was going to Mr. Earlvin's."

Sulfit's alarm became now so violent, that he actually sunk again into the chair from which he had just risen, while the servant, equally apprehensive of his master's anger, suddenly closed the door and fled to his own apartment. Osmond's rage, however, at this moment, was in some degree tempered by the anxiety Caroline's absence

occasioned. The intelligence she had received from Sulfit as to the business in which he was engaged, and her terror of the effects it might produce, were, he had no doubt, the causes of her elopement. He considered it as a matter of the utmost importance that she should be immediately removed from Mrs. Earlvin's protection, and accompany him on his intended journey. To this point his thoughts were instantly directed, and, after a pause of a few minutes, his features relaxed into a forced smile, and he apologised to the doctor for his impetuosity.

Sulfit, in some degree, recovered his composure, and Osmond proceeded :—

" I must confess to you, doctor, these inquiries from Sir William concerning his son, conveyed such forcible suspicions of my encouraging his addresses to my ward, that my irritation has, perhaps, unwarrantably rendered me somewhat abrupt to you, against whom I have certainly no

right to complain. But I think you will allow, that every exertion should be made in this business to confirm to Sir William how greatly he has deceived himself and wronged me. Now, doctor, you, as the friend of both parties, and the agent of Sir William in this particular affair, must give me your assistance."

Sulfit was gratified by such a request, and his formal civility was resumed; he declared nothing would occasion him more satisfaction, than to render himself useful to his very good and worthy friends.

"The most prompt and effectual method," continued Osmond, "of explaining to Sir William that I am equally anxious with himself to prevent this alliance, will be immediately to secure my ward and take her with me to Monmouthshire. No time must be lost in our arrangements. If she remains even till to-morrow at Earlvin's, young Herbert may obtain those

opportunities of addressing her, which will probably frustrate all our endeavours, and produce consequences we mutually dread."

Sulfit expressed his assent to these remarks by several respectful nods of satisfaction.

"Now, my good sir," continued Osmond, "if you will only have the goodness to convey my commands to Miss Almond, by delivering to her a few lines, I will immediately write; and if you will still farther oblige me, by escorting her to a small distance from Earlvin's residence, where I will be in waiting to receive her with my own carriage and post-horses, I think we may venture to affirm, that Sir William shall be convinced of his error and cured of his alarms, in less than four and twenty hours, by witnessing our arrival at Monmouth, without any tie or connexion having been formed with his son."

Dr. Sulfit agreed to these proposals with unusual alacrity, for they seemed exactly calculated

to answer all his purposes. They would convince Sir William of his exertions in the first transaction with which he had been honoured by his confidence, and, at the same time, make him useful to Mr. Osmond, who had perhaps equal power to serve him. He would also be enabled to save his travelling-expenses in returning to the country, as Osmond had offered him a seat in his carriage, while the full charges might be made to Sir William without any apprehension of his bill being taxed or his demands disputed.

A few moments were sufficient for the peremptory note to Caroline from her guardian, which commanded her instantly to leave the house to which she had fled, and place herself under the protection of Dr. Sulfit. The servant was desired to procure post-horses with all possible speed, and the doctor, after a slight and hurried repast, departed on his embassy, elevated with the consequence it conferred upon him, and convinced of his ability to fulfil it.

Osmond considered the event that had called forth these arrangements as a fortunate occurrence in the present state of his affairs; for it would form a plausible reason for his sudden departure from London, and serve as an apology for neglecting his appointment with Earlvin.

Seville left the letter with which he was intrusted at Onslow's lodgings; upon being informed by his servant he was absent from home, and that his return was uncertain, his apprehensions of its consequences were in part subdued. In his conversation during the evening with Earlvin, the latter had disclosed to him certain particulars relative to his family-concerns, which it is probable he would never have communicated but in a state of inebriety. Seville, at first, rather repressed than encouraged this confidence, from a consideration of the circumstances under which it was communicated; but a part of the relation unexpectedly referred to events that rendered him anxious for farther information. Although Earl-

vin's situation occasioned some confusion and obscurity in his discourse, yet Seville gained from it sufficient hints to urge him on immediate and active inquiries, in which he conceived both Earlvin and his wife were particularly interested.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST PAROXYSMS OF JEALOUSY.

EARLVIN was no sooner left alone, than various reflections crowded on his mind, which had hitherto been excluded from it by the events of the last few hours. He attempted to compose himself and reason with some degree of calmness on his situation; but he had taken too much wine to become suddenly sober. His feelings were agonised, and his head disordered; at intervals, he hesitated on the plans he had adopted, but the next moment brought to his recollection the occurrences of the morning, and he thought only on vengeance. He had no pistols; nor had he made any arrangement for his conveyance to the

place appointed for their meeting, which was a few miles from town. These points occupied his attention for some time; at length he resolved to procure the pistols and one of his horses from his groom, who resided in a mews at the back of his dwelling. It was near four o'clock when he left the tavern; the morning was extremely dark, and the streets almost forsaken. He proceeded with a hurried step towards his home; never had he experienced sensations so acute as those he now felt. It was the first night he had ever been away from his family, without assigning a sufficient cause for his absence. He anticipated their anxiety, and almost repented the resolution he had formed of meeting Onslow without first having an interview with Julia. On his arrival, he paused for some moments; his inclinations to enter were strongly excited, when the door was suddenly opened, and he perceived a man precipitately leave the house. From the instantaneous view he had of his person, he immediately conjectured it was Onslow. In the first emotion of his phrensy, he rushed forward with an intent to

stop him; but the recollection of his situation, and the immediate prospect of an honourable satisfaction, urged him to desist. He ran from the spot towards the apartment of his groom; the man, after some time, was called from his bed, and beheld his master with surprise and alarm. Earlvin ordered his pistols, and desired him to prepare the horse he usually rode. The servant's astonishment and terror increased; he seemed dubious of obeying the directions he received, till his master repeated them with a degree of anger and determination that left him no alternative, and, in less than a quarter of an hour, his horse was ready, and his travelling pistols presented to him. The man reminded him that the fire-arms were loaded, and requested he might follow him; but Earlvin refused his attendance, and observed, that he should soon return. It was now day-break, and wanted but an hour of the time of his appointment with Onslow. He resolved to proceed to the place immediately, but he involuntarily again passed the entrance of his house, and, in his way, he perceived a post-

chaise waiting at one end of the street. The driver had placed himself on the inside, and Felix was prevented from asking him any questions, by his desire to remain himself unnoticed. He once more gazed upon his home, perhaps for the last time; the emotions which this consideration produced, rendered him almost incapable of supporting himself upon his horse. Various were the remembrances of past happiness that rushed upon his mind; the endearing caresses of his children, and the apparent affection of his wife.

"Oh God!" he exclaimed, "how horrible is it to be convinced of the debasement of those fair and lovely parts of the creation, on whom a suspicion of vice seems almost a libel upon their Maker!"

The fumes of intoxication were not yet dispelled; his body was burnt with fever, and his mind harassed with ideas of the most wild and incongruous nature. So entirely was his ima-

gination occupied with these wanderings, that he scarcely observed the road he had taken, when they were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the same chaise he had noticed a short time before near his own house. It passed him with great rapidity; two persons were inside, and, from the momentary view he had of them, his wife and Onslow were again before his eyes. He considered, however, he must have been deceived, by the agitation and anxiety of his mind. Yet he could not rest upon this supposition, but galloped his horse till he overtook the carriage, when a faint shriek from the female within it confirmed his apprehensions, and he beheld his wife fall nearly lifeless on the bosom of his supposed rival. To describe the feelings of Earlvin at this instant would be a vain and ineffectual effort: he was no longer master of his reason; rage, agony, and despair, alternately took possession of his soul; his actions were those of the moment; he was incapable of appreciating either their causes or effects. The driver, supposing he had something to communicate, suddenly stopped, while

Felix sprang from his horse and burst open the door of the carriage. One of the pistols he had received from his groom was already in his hand. He attempted to upbraid his wife and curse Onslow, but his speech failed him, and he could only repeat the name of the former with a groan of anguish. His voice, although disguised by the convulsive agony of his feelings, was not lost upon the ear of the unfortunate Julia. She languidly raised her head on the arm of him from whom she had unconsciously received support, and, with terror and astonishment, fixed them on her wretched husband. The rage and phrensy which were depicted in his countenance, and the sight of the pistol he still grasped in his hand, occasioned her involuntarily to turn from him again towards her companion. To the distracted Felix this movement assumed the appearance of disgust towards himself and a decided preference for Onslow, a misconception that urged him to horrible and furious desperation. The pistol, which he was in the act of elevating towards his own head, he instantaneously discharged in the

carriage, and Julia, who was rushing forward to throw herself in his arms, fell senseless and bleeding at his feet.

" I have murdered her!" he exclaimed. " I have murdered my beloved, my adored wife.—God of heaven! was I reserved for this?"

He paused for a few moments; the recollection of the remaining pistol flashed upon his mind, but as he drew it from his pocket, it was wrested from him by the driver, who had by this time dismounted and arrived at the door of the carriage. Onslow, benumbed with horror, was incapable of giving any assistance to the innocent victim of his indiscretion. From the early hour of the morning but few persons were on the road, and no one had passed the place since Felix had overtaken the chaise. The driver inquired several times what was to be done, whether he should attempt to procure a surgeon, or call for assistance from the inhabitants of the opposite houses.

But Onslow heard him not, while Earlvin, kneeling by the side of his wife, pressed his lips to her cold and pallid cheek in silent agony. In a short time two or three persons arrived at the spot, and the driver informed them of the circumstances which had happened. From the appearance of Mrs. Earlvin, they supposed surgical assistance could be of little service, and therefore prepared to secure him who had wounded her, as the first and principal duty incumbent upon them. The instant, however, they attempted to move him, he was roused from a torpid state of suffering to the most violent emotions of anguish and despair. He repelled their efforts with a power and resolution they had much difficulty to overcome. He called on the names of his children, and declared himself the murderer of their mother. He entreated, he implored, that he might not be removed from her side, and struggled to release himself with convulsive energy. At length he sunk on the ground incapable of farther resistance, and was conveyed to

a small house near the road-side, insensible to the vulgar and cruel upbraidings of those by whom he was surrounded.

A surgeon who resided at a small distance now arrived; he had been called from his bed by the report of the pistol, and, observing from his window several persons assembled round a carriage from which he supposed it had been fired, he immediately hurried to the place.

In Mrs. Earlvin's present situation he was unable to discover the precise nature and probable consequences of her wound. She was already recovering from the swoon which had impressed the spectators with an idea of her death, and he requested that she might be instantly removed to his house. Onslow acquiesced to the proposal, and assisted in supporting her. In their way, they were overtaken by one of the persons who had forced Earlvin from the place; he informed them that, on his return, he had met with two gentlemen in a post-chariot, who had made some inquiries

concerning the accident, and that one of them, being a medical person, had offered his assistance.

" Here," continued the man, " is the gentleman himself."

And at that moment Dr. Sulfit arrived, and beheld the apparent lifeless form of Julia, covered with blood, and supported by Onslow and the surgeon. The doctor was not proof against the surprise and horror a sight of this description was calculated to produce. His emotions and alarm rendered him incapable of professional advice or exertion.

" You seem to know the lady, sir," exclaimed the man whose intelligence had brought him to the place.

" I know her well," answered the doctor; " she is my neighbour and friend."

" You will give us your assistance, then,"

cried another; "one surgeon is not sufficient in a case like this."

"I have a friend waiting for me yonder," replied Sulfit, "who knows the lady as well as I do. I must instantly inform him of this dreadful event."

"Who is your friend?" asked Onslow, with considerable impatience and anger, which was called forth by Sulfit's apparent hesitation to give his assistance.

"It is Mr. Osmond of Monmouthshire," replied the doctor; "he is in the post-chariot on the other side of the road."

Onslow's cheeks became flushed by the intelligence; he was now aware that he had been duped into the plans which had produced the present dreadful consequences. Although his conceptions of their source were imperfect, yet he was convinced, from several circumstances, that his

mother was but an inferior agent in their formation. He had succeeded in prevailing upon Mrs. Earlvin to quit her home by his insinuations that he would conduct her to her husband, whose absence had created alarms which rendered her incapable of exerting her usual judgement, or remarking the hesitation and confusion of Onslow as he uttered the falsehoods that imposed upon her. Her conduct, however, soon convinced him, that the opinions he had been induced to form upon her character, were incorrect; and her observations, in part, discovered the views and arrangements of Osmond. Onslow, ever subject to extremes in his pursuits, his friendships, and his resentments, no sooner felt conscious of the egregious duplicity which had been practised upon him, and of the public infamy that would probably fall upon his character in consequence of it, than he experienced feelings of rage towards the author of his disgrace, which urged him to seek for the most prompt and determined means of satisfaction. To the surgeon who had so benevolently offered his house and assistance

for the unfortunate Julia, he, in a few words, related her name and condition. He most earnestly requested that every care and attention might be shown to her, and no expense spared in procuring professional aid. He then seized the arm of Dr. Sulfit, who, stupified with astonishment and terror, mechanically walked by his side to the carriage in which Osmond was waiting.

The consequences of this interview may be easily anticipated: each party was desperate, although from different causes: Onslow was inflamed by passion, Osmond goaded by despair. Sulfit had neither power nor inclination to interfere with such disputants. After a short time, they retired to a field a small distance from the road, and, having each pistols, agreed to fire them at the same moment. Their first exchange was effective. Osmond fell; and Onslow, having hurried to the chariot in which he had left Sulfit, desired he would instantly proceed to the assistance of his friend, while he sprang into his

own chaise, and ordered the driver to take him, with all possible speed, the first stage to Dover.

Sulfit, accompanied by an outrider who had followed the carriage, ran towards the place to which Onslow had directed them, and discovered Osmond senseless and bleeding on the spot where he had fallen. With the help of two persons who soon after arrived, he was carried to the house where the wretched Earlvin was already confined.

Sulfit had failed in his task of conducting Caroline Almond to her guardian. In his eagerness and anxiety to fulfil the wishes of his employer, he misunderstood the direction to Earlvin's house, and, from the little knowledge he possessed of the streets of London, was completely bewildered in his attempts to discover it. After wandering for a considerable time, he found the hour of his appointment required that he should immediately give up the search, and pro-

ceed direct to the place of their meeting, from which he was nearly two miles distant. He hesitated for some time whether he should hazard an interview with Osmond; but, after a little reflection, the doctor made up his mind to the trial, in preference to being detained in London at his own cost, or paying the expenses requisite to carry him home. His anticipations of the rage and disappointment of his employer on seeing him alone, and being informed of the ill success of his commission, were fully verified. The state of Osmond's affairs, however, rendered it impossible for him to make any farther attempt to recover his ward, and, as he had powerful reasons for not leaving the apothecary behind, he allowed him a place in the carriage, and ordered the driver to proceed. In less than half an hour, their attention was arrested by a few persons assembled round a post-chaise on the other side of the road. Osmond's curiosity was excited, and the answers he received to his inquiries urged him to dispatch Sulfit for more accurate information.

The surgeon who so humanely undertook the care of Mrs. Earlvin, assisted by a friend in the neighbourhood, extracted the ball, which had entered her right side: but her situation was considered by them as extremely dangerous, and two professional men of the first eminence were requested to attend her.

Felix, during this time, was confined within a small dirty room of the house to which he had been conveyed, surrounded by those whom idle curiosity led to the place. He seemed insensible to the horrors of his situation; his hands were clasped together, and his eyes fixed on the ground. He made no replies to the cruel upbraidings that were addressed to him, nor attempted to move from the place where many were employed to guard him. In this situation, he was discovered by Seville, who received intelligence of the fatal event at Earlvin's residence in the early part of the morning. The

distress and horror of the poor old man in witnessing the silent agony of Felix, were such as to impress the by-standers with a conviction that they were nearly related. Under this consideration, they at length had the delicacy to withdraw to the next apartment, where another object was presented to them calculated for a time to engross their attention and curiosity. On a miserable bed lay extended the wretched Osmond, writhing under the pangs of bodily pain, and tortured with the yet more acute agonies of a diseased conscience. He was attended by Sulfit and one of the surgeons who had been engaged for Mrs. Earlvin. His wound was considered to be mortal, although it was supposed he might survive some days. This information was conveyed to him with as much caution and humanity as could be expected from those who surrounded him, yet he listened to it with remorse and terror.

Seville, after much exertion, and an appeal to the magistrates of the county, removed Felix to the same house in which his wife was placed,

where an apartment was offered for his accommodation by the benevolent owner.

Caroline Almond, while employed in attending on her beloved friend, was unacquainted with the situation of her guardian; and as she could not immediately see him, it was considered most prudent to conceal from her the circumstances of the duel.

Seville, with the anxiety and tenderness of a parent, took advantage of the intervals in which Felix seemed capable of listening to consolation, by administering it to him with calm and soothing benignity. The anguish of silent suffering at length gave way to expressions of sorrow which often relieve the most violent oppressions at the heart. He ardently desired to see his wife, but this request was peremptorily refused by the persons who had the care of her. At a late hour in the afternoon, a consultation on her case took place, and hopes were given of her recovery. This information was conveyed to Felix by one

of the surgeons with much discretion; he observed, that they considered themselves bound to make a candid report to him of Mrs. Earlvin's situation, yet it was their wish he would not rest entirely on those parts of their opinion, which coincided with his own feelings and wishes. Although Seville remained with Earlvin during the whole of the day, he made many inquiries concerning the situation of Osmond, and was extremely anxious to obtain an interview with him. The surgeons, however, would not grant his request till the evening, when he was conducted by one of them to the bed-side of his patient. The ball had been extracted, and his bodily sufferings in a great degree relieved; but the horrors of his mind were incapable of alleviation. He had been informed of a stranger's earnest desire to see him, and had forbid his admittance; but after some persuasion from his medical attendants, he consented to the conference.

A chair was placed for Seville opposite to the

bed on which the wretched man reclined, and those who were in the apartment immediately withdrew. Osmond gazed on the countenance of the visitor with considerable agitation; he perceived it was the same person whom he had seen with Earlvin the evening before, but he had no other recollection of his face or voice.

"I would willingly," said Seville, in a tone of compassion, "convey the information I am about to communicate in a manner the least likely to distress you; nor would I have disturbed you at a time like the present, but under a powerful conviction that I was called to the task by every principle of justice and humanity."

"Your humanity," answered Osmond, with sullen reserve, "will be best evinced by a brief relation of your business. I am too ill to be teased with an unmeaning preface or tedious detail."

"Are you aware," replied Seville, "of the

accusations with which you are liable to be charged, or the proofs that may be brought forward to substantiate them? At a crisis of your existence thus awful and commanding, have you no regret for the past nor anxiety for the future?"

"And who are you?" interrupted Osmond, with a degree of anger and irritation which almost deprived him of farther utterance; "who are you, that have the audacity to put such questions, or the presumption to suppose they will be answered?"

"I am one," replied Seville, "who, some twenty years past, witnessed the confessions of a villain. His name was Roseville; he had seduced the wife of a worthy man, and deprived him of his child by adopting it as his own. The horror and alarm excited by the apprehensions of approaching dissolution, urged him to an act of apparent repentance, but returning health dissipated his terrors and confirmed his guilt. Unable to recover the written testimony he had sign-

ed, he removed to a distant county, and, by a change of name and other precautions, attempted to preserve the secret he had already revealed. The child was reared and educated as his daughter, amidst scenes of vice and dissipation in which her supposed parent was continually involved. His death plunged her into embarrassments that were awfully threatening to her future prospects; yet her virtues providentially procured her the affections of a rich and honourable man, who sanctioned his protection by giving her that title to it, which secured her from calumny and detraction. Even at this period she remains ignorant of the perfidy that has cruelly deprived her of her parent; and is on the point of forfeiting her claims to the property he has lately bequeathed her. The instrument by which these rights may be asserted and confirmed, is still in my possession, and, from a few fortunate concurrences, I have discovered the person in whose behalf I am bound to demand them. You will perceive, sir," continued Seville, " from the circumstances I have thus briefly related, that the

discovery of Mrs. Earlvin's parent, and the possession of the estates she is so justly entitled to inherit, no longer depend on the secrecy you have so long and cautiously maintained."

Osmond had no doubt of the truth of these observations; he even could trace, in the emaciated figure of his visitor, the form and features of the young recluse who had witnessed with him the confessions of Roseville.

"May I be allowed," said Seville, "in some degree, to deviate from the direct purpose of this visit, by presuming to make a few observations which more particularly concern your own situation and happiness? Be assured, sir, that to conceal the mental pangs of regret for past errors, which such a period as this is calculated to call forth, is an attempt to disguise the best feelings of your nature. Poignant as such sufferings may be, the beneficent Author of the universe has ordained means for their alleviation. An open and candid acknowledgement is the

most sure sign of repentance, and the only specific for that peace and serenity which is so desirable in the hour of sickness, and so requisite in our contemplations on a future state."

"I am bewildered and agonised," exclaimed Osmond, "with various reflections, and am unable to arrange my thoughts, or form those resolutions my peace of mind perhaps requires. For the present, I wish to be left alone. In the morning, I will see you again. I have much to communicate, but possess neither firmness nor strength for the task."

Seville, after some farther attempts at consolation, and a promise to see him at an early hour the following day, withdrew; while Osmond reviewed the various incidents of his past life with horror and dismay.

It was now considered requisite that Caroline Almond should be informed of the situation of her guardian. The intelligence was conveyed to

her by one of the surgeons who attended him, and the unfeigned sorrow she expressed on receiving the information was highly honourable to her feelings. The cold reserve and severity of Mr. Osmond's behaviour towards her was neither calculated to excite her affections or esteem; yet she earnestly requested to be immediately conducted to his bed-side, that she might render him every aid and attention within her power to bestow. The surgeon, however, declared, that the weak and debilitated state to which he was reduced, made it absolutely necessary that their meeting should be deferred till the morning.

Seville, on his return to Earlvin's chamber, found him in a more agitated state than when he had quitted it. He, for the first time since the fatal catastrophe of the morning, named his children, and expressed a desire to see them.

" Powers of mercy!" he exclaimed, " aid me to support the interview: enable me once more to receive the caresses of my infants. Alas!

the prayer is impious. Will they not embrace the assassin of their mother? will they not perhaps cling to the bosom of her murderer? O God! the horrors with which I am surrounded mock reality. These feelings are the result of wild and terrible insanity."

"Let me once more, my dear sir," said the mild and venerable Seville, "request that you will endeavour to compose yourself. You have already been informed that strong hopes are entertained of Mrs. Earlvin's recovery: be prevailed upon to defer this interview with your children for a few days, and you may perhaps share it with their mother."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Felix, while his whole frame seemed convulsed, and he grasped the hand of Seville with frantic violence, "it is impossible; these flattering hopes, these delusive insinuations, will drive me to distraction! Have I not destroyed her? Did I not behold the wound these hands inflicted? Did I not per-

ceive streams of blood flow from her heart, and observe forgiveness in her eyes even when they were closing upon me for ever?"

"For heaven's sake, moderate your emotions," replied Seville, "be assured there is every probability of your being again restored to your wife, your children, and your home."

"What scenes of happiness do those beloved names bring to my remembrance!" exclaimed Felix. "Wretch that I am, how have I abused the joys they bestowed! Oh, Seville! is it possible to account for the intricate wanderings, the horrible infatuation, of that fatal passion, which is even capable of urging us to destroy what is dearer to us than our own existence?"

"Perhaps," answered Seville, "it would be less presumptuous, and more serviceable, to mark the effects, rather than to trace the causes, of the various passions that agitate the heart.

By attempting to analyse the latter, we vainly endeavour to seek into those secret springs of human action, which are only to be developed by the omnipotent Author of human existence. But by attentive observation and serious reflections on the former, we are imperceptibly led to estimate the magnitude and danger of their influence, while we acquire firmness and resolution to subdue them."

" I possessed every blessing," cried Earlvin, " that could be desired by the most sensitive voluptuary for self-happiness. I was conscious that the materials for felicity were within my grasp, but my bosom was tortured by a fiend which poisoned all my enjoyments."

" That fiend," answered Seville, " was not invulnerable to the exertions of reason. The most powerful and effective barrier to our passions, is the exercise of our mental faculties by which we are enabled to appreciate the justice and necessity of their suppression."

" Are such exertions possible," asked Felix, " during those horrible paroxysms which produce only acts of ferocious desperation ?"

" Probably not," replied Seville; " yet as every passion has, in some degree, a progressive state, much might be hoped and expected from them, when the mind is influenced but not subdued by the feelings which agitate it. The slight and transient consequences produced by their first impulse, unfortunately create but little anxiety to quell or retard a dangerous maturity."

Earlvin, in the course of this conversation, was prevailed upon to defer, for the present, an interview with his children; and Seville, after using every argument he was capable of urging for his comfort and consolation, took his leave for the night. On the following morning, the favourable report of the surgeons on Mrs. Earlvin's wound was repeated with increased confidence to

her husband. A message was also received at an early hour from Osmond, requesting the presence of his ward and Seville. They were conducted to his chamber by Sulfit, who had sat up with him during the night. The wretched sufferer extended his hand to Caroline as she approached, and seemed much affected by the distress she evinced for his situation.

"I have not deserved this, my good girl!" he exclaimed, while her tears dropped on his hand which she pressed to her lips; "indeed, I have not deserved this tenderness. If you knew all, you would curse me."

"Never," replied Caroline, as she knelt by his side, and still held his hand to her bosom. "I have received from you the protection of a parent."

"Hold," cried Osmond, "such words as those distress me far more than your reproaches.

They plant daggers in my heart. I have deprived you of the protection of a parent. I have robbed you of the embraces of a father."

"These words must be the effects of a wandering and disordered mind," cried Caroline.

"They are the confessions of a diseased and guilty conscience," interrupted Osmond with increased energy. "I would willingly communicate certain events in my past life, but I have no strength to support the exertion it would require, nor courage to withstand the reproaches they might call forth."

"You have no cause to apprehend reproach, or despair of forgiveness," replied Seville; "there is not, I hope, a being in existence, who would inflict the one, or deny the other, at a crisis like the present."

After a pause of several minutes, during

which he seemed struggling under various emotions, he again addressed the trembling Caroline:—

"In detailing the few causes that urged me to conceal you from an affectionate father, I would not be considered as making any attempts to extenuate my conduct; but rather, by a candid confession of my motives, evince the sincerity of my repentance. In this relation," he continued, while he presented her with a written paper on which he had been employed during the night, "you will discover, that you are not the only victim of my perfidy. In the settlement of my affairs, and the division of my fortune, I have endeavoured to atone, in some measure, for the injuries I have committed; but I am conscious they are beyond the power of reparation. I dare not look upon you while you peruse that fatal paper, which communicates the extent of my guilt. Shame, agony, and despair, occupy my soul, and overwhelm me with horrors."

Seville and Caroline made several attempts to soothe the agitation of his mind, but he appeared insensible to consolation; they were at length advised by the surgeons to withdraw from his chamber; and, having returned to the house in which Earlvin and his wife remained, they anxiously examined the following paper presented to them by the wretched sufferer.

NARRATIVE.

My father was a man of moderate fortune, but strict probity; he married my mother before she was seventeen, and retired with his young wife to a large estate which he possessed in a remote county of England. He was one of those characters who generally receive the appellation of an inoffensive good-natured man. He said but little, and, perhaps, thought less; calmness and civility were the leading traits in his disposition, and there were but few events in the catalogue of

human calamities that would have ruffled his temper or disturbed his tranquillity. My mother was a woman of high spirit, gay, dissipated, and extravagant. She had been educated under a system of speculation by her parents, with a view that her personal accomplishments would insure her a splendid alliance. The sums they expended to render her (as they considered) capable of such a station, reduced the comfortable income they possessed to a bare subsistence; and on the day of their daughter's marriage, they became pensioners on the bounty of her husband. I am the eldest of two children which were the fruits of this union. I had the misfortune, I might almost say, the curse, to become the professed and decided favourite of my mother. From the earliest years of my infancy to the days of my manhood, every capricious whim, every wish of my heart, were indulged and gratified with an anxiety that anticipated the desires they created; while my sister, who was two years younger than myself, received little tenderness or attention but what was bestowed from the good-nature and commis-

eration of the servants employed to take care of her. If my father was aware of the cruelty and injustice of such proceedings, he had not sufficient energy to prevent them. The extravagance of his wife reduced his fortune, while the dissipation in which she involved him injured his health; and, by the time his children had arrived at years of maturity, he was a poor and infirm man. My mother's pride would not allow her to consent that I should be brought up to any profession, and she even resigned some of her own luxuries to support the expensive pleasures into which I had plunged for want of employment. My vices she termed follies, my daring impetuosity she called spirit; she made me a coxcomb by admiring my person, and hardened my heart by neglecting to teach me humanity. I feel regret, and even horror, in laying these serious accusations on her memory; but when I reflect on the duties of a mother, on the power of her example, and the force of her precepts, I cannot but appreciate the value of her tenderness, and (from fatal experience) feel equally convinced of the cruelty

of her neglect. Neither the personal attractions nor the mental accomplishments of my sister, her amiable disposition or affectionate temper, were capable of subduing her mother's unnatural antipathy, which evidently increased as her daughter's beauty and good qualities became more conspicuous, till her envy was excited by her charms, and her ill-humour increased by a consciousness of the superiority of her mind. Under these circumstances, the severity of her conduct increased to so alarming a height, that her daughter was obliged to fly to the protection of a female relative. This person was a sister of my father's, whose husband had lately procured a situation of some consequence in the West Indies, and who had written to his wife an earnest request that she would take the first opportunity of following him to Jamaica. She had long witnessed, with regret and indignation, the miseries of her niece's situation; she had expostulated with her brother on the injustice of his conduct, but without effect: he confessed her observations were correct, yet, to make the arrangements they required, would

revolutionise his family, and destroy his domestic peace. Convinced that her niece had no prospect of redress from her father, she proposed that she should accompany her to the West Indies; an offer received with joy and gratitude by my sister, and gladly accepted by her parents. My father's acquiescence to this proposal was perhaps urged by the increasing difficulties of his pecuniary affairs, and the probability such an arrangement held forth of a respectable settlement for his daughter without the usual aid of a dowry.

About this time, the effects of my extravagance began to assume a very serious aspect. My mother was no longer able to supply the demands I had hitherto made upon her; my father was involved in debt as well as myself; our creditors were exasperated, and we were both placed in a jail. The sufferings of my wretched parents under this dreadful reverse of fortune may be well conceived. Inured to every indulgence and luxury that affluence could purchase, they were ill prepared, either to sustain a privation of their

comforts, or support the degradation of poverty. They died within two months of each other, in less than half a year after my father's confinement. My sister attended them with the most affectionate care during this period; they acknowledged her goodness, but the consciousness of their former cruelty towards her, increased their misery and hastened their dissolution.

If my errors had been merely occasioned by those wild irregularities of youth, that are not always detached from generous feelings and a good heart, the consequences of them would have wrung my bosom with contrition, and I should have received a lesson never to have been erased from my mind. On the contrary, my sufferings were only occasioned by the deprivation of my pleasures; and I experienced neither regret nor sorrow for the miseries of those whom I had ruined by my extravagance. I received the information of the death of my parents with little emotion; my thoughts were entirely occupied in plans to escape from my bondage. In order to forward my views,

I was necessitated carefully to conceal them, and express feelings and assurances of repentance I secretly despised. My sister and my aunt were completely deceived by my hypocrisy, and actively exerted themselves to extricate me from my difficulties. My uncle, in one of his letters, had mentioned his want of an English clerk to aid him in the duties of his office, and had requested his wife to make inquiries for a person possessed of the qualifications he described as requisite. She proposed to me that I should accept this situation, and she offered to compromise with my creditors for a part of their debts, that they might allow me the opportunity of paying them the remainder at a future time. Although these liberal propositions were not entirely to my inclinations, yet I had no other chance of being released from confinement. I therefore feigned much pleasure and gratitude in acquiescing to them, and, in the course of three weeks, I accompanied my aunt and sister to the sea-port from which we sailed to the West Indies. We had a favourable voyage; and, on our arrival at Jamaica, were received by

my uncle with the utmost cordiality and affection. I was immediately placed in the station he had kept open for me, and desired to consider his house as my home. Although the emoluments of my office were not very considerable, yet they procured me every enjoyment the island afforded, and would, with proper care, have enabled me, in a few years, to have paid the several balances due to my creditors in England. Instead, however, of adopting so laudable a system, I lived up to every shilling of my income, and should even have exceeded it, had I not been restrained from apprehensions of punishment I was incapable of escaping under my present circumstances.

My sister, a short time after our settlement in the island, attracted the regard of a wealthy English planter. He had, a few years before, married a young woman possessed of great personal attractions, who, having fled from him with their only child (an infant but a few months old), died soon after in England, while under the pro-

tection of her seducer. Mr. Wellsford (the name of the planter) received certain information of his wife's death, but could gain no intelligence of his child. He was universally beloved by his neighbours, and on terms of intimacy with the most opulent and respectable inhabitants of Jamaica. From the day of his marriage with my sister, I received from him the appellation and friendship of a brother. The embarrassed circumstances under which I quitted England were carefully concealed from him by my relatives, and I had sufficient guard upon my conduct to preserve his good opinion; yet, with all the advantages that were attached to my situation, I was unhappy and dissatisfied. I anxiously sought for some excuse to return to England; and circumstances soon occurred that favoured my wishes. My sister died a few years after her union with Mr. Wellsford, and left a daughter about two years old. My brother-in-law resolved, on the death of his second wife, to quit Jamaica for ever; and his resolutions on this point were strengthened by the opinions of several medical men, who affirm-

ed, that the preservation of his child depended on her being immediately removed from the West Indies. At this period I laboured under a slight fit of sickness, which I determined to render subservient to my views in leaving the island. I persuaded an ignorant apothecary who attended me, to declare that the climate was extremely pernicious to my constitution, and that the only chance of saving my life was my immediate return to England. This information was received by my friends with strong feelings of compassion and regret. Mr. Wellsford and my uncle each presented me with a sum of money for the expenses of my voyage, and my support in England, till I procured employment; and the former gave me letters of introduction to several eminent merchants with whom he had extensive connexions. About a week before the time fixed for my leaving Jamaica, some peculiar circumstances interfered with the arrangements Mr. Wellsford had anxiously planned to facilitate his own departure, and he found it would be actually necessary that he should remain in the

island some months longer. He resolved, however, not to hazard the life of his child by the delay; he therefore requested I would take the charge of her to England, and place her under the care of a tender nurse, till he should himself be enabled to receive her. To this request I assented with apparent satisfaction. He also intrusted me with a very large sum of money due to one of his correspondents in London, as a payment on some extensive speculations in which they had been jointly concerned. During my voyage, my mind was wholly occupied on the plans I should adopt for the future, and the means I should employ to evade the reproaches of my former associates. These were points of some difficulty, upon which I was undetermined, even on my arrival in England. I, however, fulfilled the first and principal instructions of Mr. Wellsford, by placing his daughter with a respectable woman who resided in a small village in Devonshire. I then repaired to London in order to procure an interview with the merchant to whom I was to pay the money; but I was informed that he had died a

few months before my arrival, and that his executor and only relative resided in a remote part of Wales. The following day, I met with two of my former companions, who were engaged in some extensive speculations in which I was invited to take a share, provided I had a sufficient sum to subscribe towards their capital. From the sanguine expectations of these men, I was led to believe, that the money advanced would be returned in a few months. The executor of the merchant with whom I was now bound to settle Mr. Wellsford's account, having no expectation of such an event, I determined to invest Mr. Wellsford's property (which amounted to five thousand pounds) in the speculative schemes that were proposed to me. I was soon undeceived as to the return of the capital in the short time I had calculated, but, from some fortunate circumstances connected with the plans in which we had engaged, our hopes of their ultimate success were considerably increased. My only anxiety was now to conceal from Mr. Wellsford the unwarrantable use I had made of his property; a task I

almost despaired of accomplishing, as I daily expected his arrival in England. At this time, I received information from the nurse with whom I had placed his daughter, that the child was dangerously ill of a fever which was then raging in the neighbourhood; and the second letter from this woman informed me, that although the best medical advice had been procured, yet no hopes were entertained of her recovery. Vessels were hourly expected to sail for the West Indies, and, at the very moment I received the last intelligence from the nurse, I was employed in writing to Mr. Wellsford. It instantly occurred to me, that information of his daughter's death would delay his arrival in England, if not entirely prevent it. My desires, on this point, were too powerful to render me dubious of the means I should employ to fulfil them. In the letter on which I was engaged, I informed him his child was no more, while I felt perfectly assured, from the report of the nurse, that my information was verified even at the time I wrote it. In the course of a few days, however, after the vessel sailed, I under-

stood that a favourable alteration had taken place in the complaint; and, in less than a fortnight, she was declared out of danger. As the cause that urged me to prevent Mr. Wellsford's departure from Jamaica still continued, I took no measures to contradict the distressing intelligence I had conveyed to him, but anxiously waited for his answer, by which I expected to be informed of his future arrangements. During this interval, I was under some alarm from the threats of one of my former creditors; and to avoid them, I removed to a small village in Dorsetshire, where I secluded myself as much as possible for several months.

In this retirement, I accidentally became acquainted with Captain Roseville, the seducer of Mr. Wellsford's first wife, and, from circumstances which I have now neither strength nor power to detail, was informed, that he had adopted the child of the man whom he had so cruelly injured. This secret, after the death of Roseville, I had every reason to suppose was known only to myself.

I had, therefore, no apprehensions of my interests being affected by a discovery of Mr. Wellsford's eldest daughter. Yet I was under much alarm on the false intelligence I had conveyed to him, fearful that it might occasion his sudden arrival in England, and produce a discovery of my perfidy. I removed his child to a more remote county, and I fabricated a tale which I conceived would prevent any application for the money he supposed to have been long since paid.

" In the course of a few months, I received a letter from Mr. Wellsford, in answer to the one that informed him of the death of his daughter. After bewailing her loss in the most affecting terms, he observed, that his return to England would be uncertain, as he had neither health nor spirits for the voyage; and in the following month, he communicated to me his determination of residing in Jamaica during the remainder of his life. In the interval between the receipt of these letters, my pecuniary circumstances experienced a considerable revolu-

tion; the speculations in which I had engaged suddenly assumed a very desirable aspect, and I soon after received a sum nearly treble that I had so unwarrantably advanced. From motives of interest, rather than principle, I immediately discharged Mr. Wellsford's debt, while I cautiously watched an opportunity to improve the remaining part of the property I possessed, instead of appropriating it for the payment of those creditors whose lenity had released me from a jail. It is needless to relate the plans I adopted for this purpose. In a few years I acquired sufficient property to render me independent. Experience had taught me prudence: I procured the same pleasures which I formerly enjoyed, but I purchased them with caution and economy.—The passion of avarice gradually took possession of my soul: I had felt the miseries and degradation which are inflicted by poverty, and its horrors were continually before my eyes. My pride urged me to mix with the elevated and respectable; and I had sufficient penetration to discover, that my most sanguine and interested

views might be forwarded among those classes of society. From such motives I paid every debt I had formerly contracted, and maintained my credit with the most cautious punctuality. I seized every opportunity of forming connexions above my own sphere, and, while I lavished large sums to support a splendid establishment, I practised the most rigid economy in every other part of my expenditure.

" My expectations on Mr. Wellsford's fortune, however gratifying to my avarice, would not have induced me to conceal from him the knowledge of his daughter's existence. But the communication of such an event must inevitably have exposed the falsehood I had propagated, and there was no punishment I so much dreaded as the forfeiture of the reputation I had acquired.

" Yet I was unable entirely to controul those passions which had formerly overwhelmed me with disgrace. I still frequented the company of professed gamesters, whose high rank and

noble titles were debased by arts that formed the very essence of their pursuit. My experience preserved me from imposition, but I was not invulnerable to a run of ill fortune. Irritated by the successive losses of two nights' play, I was on the third goaded to exceed the stakes which I had resolved should form the limits of my risk; in a few hours I was deprived of nearly a third part of my fortune, and, on the following day, I bound myself by a solemn oath never to hazard another guinea on the chances either of cards or dice. Aware of the ridicule and reproaches this resolution would draw upon me, I resolved to abandon London, and maintain, in some distant county, that degree of pompous parade I was no longer capable of supporting in the metropolis. Caroline Wellsford had attained her sixth year. From the several letters I had received from her father since the time he was deceived by the account of her decease, I felt perfectly convinced of his determination never to quit Jamaica, and my fears of his discovering his daughter were entirely subdued. Under cir-

cumstances thus favourable to my wishes, I resolved to remove Caroline to my own residence, and flattered myself I should, in some degree, expiate my crime, by taking upon myself the duties of a parent. The attempt was impious; I had no feelings for such a task: my manners were neither calculated to excite her confidence nor esteem.

" My proceedings since this epoch, I need not relate. They are already known, while my soul sickens at the recollection of the past, and looks towards the future with agony and despair."

Thus concluded a narrative which presented a striking example of vices, matured in the uncontrolled indulgence of youthful levity, and continued from a sensibility to those false notions of disgrace that seemed attached to their discovery or reformation. The unhappy subject of this memoir, with all his exertions for self-inter-

est and gratification, was incapable of guarding against the impulse of intoxicating passion that produced the most effective punishment. His pride would probably never have been sufficiently subdued to have produced a confession of his crimes, but from the awful reflections his situation called forth. It was considered requisite that the information which this paper contained should, for the present, be carefully concealed from Mrs. Earlvin, while Caroline Almond, unable to conceal the powerful emotions it had occasioned, embraced her sister with a degree of rapture and enthusiasm that threatened immediate discovery.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

EARLVIN received daily the reports of the surgeons who attended his wife, and they progressively confirmed the hopes that had been given of her recovery. His reflections were of a nature to produce very powerful reasoning on the past, and strong resolutions for the future. The dreadful effects of the passion which had so long been kindling in his bosom, were developed in its last paroxysm, with a degree of horrible yet luminous illustration, that carried conviction to his soul. The impressions which such a catastrophe was calculated to convey, are not to be considered

as the transient reproofs derived from common occurrences in life, but as a great and awful lesson never to be obliterated from the mind. Various and poignant were the feelings his reveries occasioned; the confirmation of the fallacy of his suspicions, was blended with shame and regret for having ever experienced them; and, while he trembled at the recollection of his former phrensy, his heart dilated with love and gratitude to that Providence who had bestowed on him forcible instruction, and yet preserved him from the punishment that seemed attached to it.

Osmond's wound, on the third day, presented such favourable appearances, as induced his surgeons to give some hopes that his life might be preserved for a considerable time, although they considered it would ultimately be the cause of his death. Caroline attended him with much care and solicitude; but her tenderness seemed to reproach him with the cruelty of his past conduct:

it was in vain she endeavoured to soothe those self-upbraidings of conscience which agitated his mind, and increased the fever his medical attendants so earnestly wished to subdue. Her time was divided between her late-discovered sister and her guardian, while she anxiously looked forward to the period when she might embrace the former under the affectionate appellation she so ardently wished to communicate.

Young Herbert, who had expressed the most tender concern for her health during the late alarming events, was a constant attendant in the neighbourhood; and was enabled to make observations on her character, which increased his esteem, and confirmed his regard. His sudden departure from his college only a few days after his return to it from Monmouthshire, was occasioned by a letter from his father, whom he had not seen since the accident that introduced him to Osmond's family. Sir William, in this epistle, informed his son, that he had not only

received an account of his having preserved the life of his neighbour's ward, but he was also acquainted with his subsequent attentions to that young lady, which called from him the information and advice he was about to communicate. This information related to certain confused anecdotes he had heard concerning Osmond during his early life, and the advice was conveyed rather as a command than a caution, to be careful of forming an attachment that might disgrace his family and endanger his own happiness.

The natural warmth of young Herbert's temper urged him to consider this letter as an infringement on the liberty of opinion and conduct he had hitherto been allowed to enjoy. With his usual haste and impetuosity, he left Oxford the following morning. On his arrival in London, he discovered Earlvin's address, and immediately proceeded to his house, although he had scarcely a question to ask

as an excuse for his visit. From Mrs. Earlvin's conversation, Herbert was informed of the arrangements that had been made by Mr. Osmond for the settlement of his ward, and, although she gave no opinion as to Caroline's inclinations towards the proposed alliance, yet Herbert flattered himself, from the evasive replies he received to certain parts of his inquiries, that the affections of the young lady were still disengaged. This conclusion was calculated to increase his ardour, and encourage his perseverance: he promised Mrs. Earlvin that he would not disturb the tranquillity of Mr. Osmond's family by his presence, or take such means to procure an interview with Miss Almond, as would be likely to increase the severity and ill humour of her guardian. He, however, considered, that these promises in no way restricted him from remaining in London.

On the following evening, he was informed by his servant, that Dr. Sulfit had just arrived

in town, and had been seen to enter Mr. Osmond's house by one who had the curiosity to trace him from the inn where he alighted. This intelligence, in addition to a part of the contents of his father's letter, convinced him that the doctor was in the confidence of Sir William, and he had no doubt but his journey to London was as an official agent in the business, which seemed to occasion the latter so much anxiety and alarm. Vexed and irritated at the interference of a stranger in an affair that required considerable delicacy, Herbert immediately proceeded to the house of Mr. Osmond with the intention of coming to explanations that now appeared absolutely necessary for the interest of both parties. In his way he met Caroline, attended only by her own servant, hurrying towards the residence of her friend Mrs. Earlvin. This interview produced those declarations on the part of Herbert, which, under other circumstances, he would perhaps have cautiously concealed. Caroline's terror and agitation pre-

vented her either from refusing his company, or requiring he should change a conversation which she might have considered as somewhat abrupt and assuming. On their arrival at Earlvin's house, they found Julia in the utmost anxiety and distress at the unusual absence of her husband, whom she had not seen since the morning. Herbert remained for some time aiding the endeavours of Caroline to calm the fears of her friend, whose alarms were increased from a consideration of the events which had occurred in the early part of the day. Mrs. Earlvin at length became sensible of the impropriety of Herbert's visit at so unseasonable an hour, and the consequences that might ensue, should Felix return before his departure. She therefore immediately urged the necessity of his absence with the most earnest solicitude, and Herbert in a short time took his leave, while Earlvin observed him quit the house under the most violent emotions of rage and jealousy.

The surgeons who attended Osmond at length

declared he might be removed by cautious and slow travelling to his seat in Monmouthshire. Caroline requested to accompany him in this journey, but he firmly refused the attentions she was so anxious to bestow upon him. Indeed there still remained some shades of the strong and prominent traits of Osmond's former character, even in the midst of his punishment and contrition. His principal wish was to escape from the observations of those who were acquainted with the perfidy that had marked the actions of his early life. He had already made over a considerable part of his property to the daughters of the much-injured Wellsford, under forms of law, that rendered it impossible for him to retract; and, although he preserved a sufficient income to maintain a handsome establishment, his hopes on its future enjoyment were extremely limited and feeble. His physicians hinted, that if, after a few weeks, his strength was so far recruited as to enable him to undertake a sea voyage, they should recommend Lisbon for his residence during the following win-

ter. They could not have proposed a more desirable arrangement to their patient, who waited with much anxiety for the moment when he might be allowed to leave England.

The progress of Mrs. Earlvin's recovery was gradual; the events and discoveries that had occurred since her confinement were conveyed to her with care and discretion; and the interview with her husband and children was deferred as long as possible, that she might be the better enabled to support the emotions it was calculated to call forth.

It was near a month after the catastrophe that had reduced them to their present situation, before the surgeons would consent to this meeting, and Julia was yet extremely weak and debilitated. On the morning of the day appointed for the interview, her two children were placed by her side on the sofa upon which she reclined. The youngest hung round her neck, while the eldest, with affectionate caresses, kissed away the

tears that fell on her bosom. It was at this moment, that Felix, conducted by the mild and venerable Seville, entered the apartment. Their approach was silent and cautious. Earlvin, with clasped hands, and a countenance expressive of the most powerful and various sensations, gazed on his wife for some moments before she was conscious he was in the room. The moment she beheld him, she attempted to utter his name, but her voice melted into a faint ejaculation of joy, and she sunk pale and senseless in his embrace.

The interval of silence which followed this interesting moment, can only be employed by the narrator in a confession of his inability to describe the feelings it produced. To him, however, whose unfortunate passion was the source of the lesson it conveyed, the impressions were never to be obliterated. The consciousness of present felicity was mingled with reflections on the dangers he had escaped, and a perfect conviction of the errors that had occasioned them.

" Oh ! Seville," exclaimed the trembling and repentant victim, " even the delicious sensations of this moment are embittered with painful and agonising emotions. The enthusiasm of love and rapture that should warm my heart and elevate me with a sense of my blessings, is chilled by the recollection of my unworthiness !"

" Allow me, then, for the last time," answered the old man, whose withered cheeks were bedewed with tears, while his hands and eyes were elevated towards heaven with pious fervour, " to call your attention to that Providence, who has preserved you in the hour of eminent peril, and afforded you a lesson of awful instruction. May the events of the last few months, with the sensations they have excited, and the effects they have produced, be impressed on your mind vivid and immutable during the remaining part of your life ! May they form a series of illustrations on the necessity of suppressing those violent and dangerous passions of the human heart, which often undermine the brightest virtues, and subdue

the best feelings of our nature! May they develop those slow and insidious movements that gradually lead the unwary victim from simple error to bold and confirmed vice! And may they," continued the aged and pious orator, while he sunk on his trembling knees, and his little auditory surrounded him in the same humble posture, " may they serve to call forth your gratitude to that almighty and beneficent Being, whose eye encircles the universe he has created, and traces with unerring accuracy the secret recesses of the soul! who looks down on the creatures he has called into life with benign love and tenderness, and who supplies their wants, and promotes their enjoyments, with the affectionate solicitude of a fond and indulgent parent!"

Osmond remained no longer in England than was absolutely requisite for him to recover sufficient strength to quit it. During this interval, he made arrangements that placed Mrs. Earlvin in the possession of the property bequeathed to her

by her father, beyond the power of molestation from those whose interests were affected by her claims. He also secured the fortune he had made over to Caroline by the most firm and legal means, and, having disposed of his estate in Monmouthshire, he presented each of his servants with a small sum above the amount of their wages, and discharged the whole of them from his employ. After a tedious and melancholy voyage, he arrived at Lisbon, a weak emaciated wanderer. He was enabled to purchase every luxury the city afforded; and his most sanguine hopes were realised in the plans of concealment he had so cautiously adopted. But his situation commanded comforts and enjoyments of a very different nature. The languor of ill health, a debilitated body, and subdued spirits, required sources of consolation, of which Osmond was entirely destitute. His courage failed with his strength; he became restless, feeble, and timid, till at length worn out by the agonies of disease, and the horrors of an afflicted conscience, he expired in the midst of his foreign domestics, a few

months after his arrival at Lisbon. By a will that was placed in the hands of his solicitor in London, the remaining part of his property was equally divided between Caroline and her sister. His character exhibited a striking and forcible example of the dangerous consequences that may be expected from an early and unlimited indulgence to youthful passions, and the fallacy and injustice of those sordid principles of action in which self-gratification is the main and leading spring.

Onslow, after rambling over the continent for several years, and plunging into every scene of vice and dissipation that opened to his view, returned to his native country a bankrupt in fortune and constitution. He subsisted for some months on the bounty of those who had known him in his prosperity, and expired under the infirmities of premature old age. The few virtues he possessed were opposed to powerful vices. He was generous without principle, and sincere without honesty; his passions were the sensitive vibrations

that governed all his actions, and his best feelings were only excited when he had no temptation to subdue them.

His mother lavished away the property she possessed by the will of Mr. Wellsford in the most abandoned and licentious society, and died at an advanced age, a dreadful example of hardened depravity.

Herbert and Caroline, after a short interval, were united to each other. Sir William, whose objections were occasioned by the character of the person he considered as her guardian, acquiesced to their union immediately he became acquainted with the circumstances of her real situation. Herbert, in the calm and tranquil enjoyments of domestic society, gradually acquired a stability and firmness of character that converted the romantic ardour and impetuosity of a youthful attachment, to those refined and matured affections which are experienced by the father of a family for the mother of his children.

Earlvin, after some difficulty, prevailed upon Seville to accept of a neat cottage that was situated near his own residence in Monmouthshire, while he increased his comforts by the addition of a small annuity, and generously lessened his sense of obligation, in allowing him to superintend a part of his estates, and bestowing on him the appellation of his principal steward. He lived to a very advanced age, and, through the friendship and hospitality of his benevolent neighbour, the last years of his life were warmed with those cheering enjoyments of domestic society, that are as desirable to the refined scholar as to the uncultivated rustic.

Earlvin and his wife became old in the midst of a numerous and amiable family. They experienced many years of uninterrupted felicity; and although, at intervals, a pensive melancholy would accompany the recollection of the past, yet it produced reflections most likely to insure their hopes on the future. Felix watched the slow and subtle developement of the human passions in the bosoms

of his children, with the anxiety of a parent; his instructions were conveyed with a warmth of eloquence and energy of feeling his situation and experience were so well calculated to convey. Yet, in the fervour and enthusiasm of his lessons, he still remembered, with trembling humility, the attributes of that Providence, who had preserved him in the most awful crisis of his existence, and rendered him sensible of the duties and happiness of *a married man.*

THE END.

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